

11 V. J.

THE
Divine Authority
OF THE
OLD and NEW TESTAMENT
ASSERTED:

With a farther Vindication of the Characters of MOSES, and the PROPHETS; our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, and his APOSTLES.

Being a DEFENCE of the FIRST VOLUME of this Work, against the Exceptions and Misrepresentations in the SECOND VOLUME of

The MORAL PHILOSOPHER.

By JOHN LELAND, D. D.

Author of an ANSWER to a Book entitled,
Christianity as Old as the CREATION.

VOLUME the SECOND.

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OF THE

PRELACE
TO THE NEW TESTAMENT
ASSEMBLED

THE Author of the Moral
Philosophy, who honours
himself with the Title of
a Philosopher, a Lover of
Truth, has been pleased to
publish another Book, which
contains a new and more
complete System of Moral
Philosophy, than the former
one, and which he formerly
declared, as he had done before, that he
had no other View in writing
his Book, but to serve and promote the
Cause of Truth, Peace, and Right.



Reasoning, and Observation, which
is far from that of Superstition, which
has always been the Basis of De-
struction of it, &c. It is well we
have his own Word for this, or else from
his manner of Writing, the Man would
have suspected it to be so.

LONDON
M.DCC.XI.
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T H E
P R E F A C E.

 H E Author of the *Moral Philosopher*, who honours himself with the Title of *Philalethes*, a Lover of Truth, has been pleased to publish another Book, which he calls *The Second Volume of the Moral Philosopher, or a farther Vindication of Moral Truth and Reason*. And he solemnly declares, as he had done before, that he had no other View or Aim in writing his Book, but to serve and promote the Cause of Truth, Peace, and Righteousness, and to separate the true Religion from that of Superstition, which has always proved the Bane and Destruction of it, p. 10. It is well we have his own Word for this, or else from his manner of writing, no Man would have suspected it to be so. If he really

intended to be an Advocate for Truth and Religion, he is certainly one of the most unhappy Advocates that ever appeared, since the Methods he makes use of are fit only to serve Error and Imposture; and are enough to disgrace the best Cause in the World.

He had in his former Book declared, that if any Man *made Reprizals upon him* in this Controversy, he would *cheerfully submit to the keenest Revenges of Truth and Reason*, and be *always ready to own the great Advantage and Honour of being thus conquered*. And that if in attempting to serve the Cause of Virtue and true Religion he has *miss'd his Aim*, he has put it in the power of his Adversary, by *setting him right*, to lay him under the strongest Obligations of Gratitude and Respect *. I endeavoured to answer his Invitation, and by detecting his Mistakes and Misrepresentations, gave him an Opportunity of rectifying them. But this instead of engaging his Acknowledgments, has only raised his Indignation,

* See *Mor. Phil.* Vol. I. Pref. P. 4.

dignation. And he seems resolved to let the World see what a dangerous thing it is to presume to contradict a Writer of his Importance. Tho' he appears to be mightily displeased with any that suppose the *Apostles* or *Prophets* to have been under an infallible Guidance, he acts as if he thought he had the Privilege of Infallibility in his own Person. I do not find that he has acknowledged or retracted any one Mistake, throughout his whole Book, tho' several of them are so gross that it is impossible to defend them. When he is most pressed, the way he takes to justify himself, is, to *persist* in what he had advanced, and *assert* it with greater Confidence than before; at the same time assuring his Reader, that I had not said one Word to the Purpose; and that all that was offered against him was mere impertinent Declamation and Harangue. And to this he usually adds a most fearful Outcry against *Systems* and *School-Divinity*. When he has nothing else to say in answer to an Argument, it is but calling it *Systematical*,

and this must pass for effectual Confutation of it. And I believe the World will do him the justice to acquit him from the Charge of being a *Systematical Writer*, since it does not appear either from his former Book or from this, that he has any consistent *Scheme* of Principles at all.

The Reader cannot but observe, that tho' this Author allows himself an unbounded Liberty with the *Characters* of the most excellent Persons, yet he shews an extreme Sensibility with regard to his own. He sometimes complains heavily, as if I had used him very ill; tho' I know no Instance in which I have done so, except by detecting his Misrepresentations, laying open the Injustice and Falshood of his Aspersions, and shewing the Weakness of his Reasonings. This I was obliged to do in my former Book, and I have had farther occasion to do it in this. If this tends to expose him, (and who can answer such a Writer without thus exposing him?) it is what he has drawn upon himself, and

and to himself alone he is obliged for it. But as to his *Invectives* against me, and the little flirts of low *Buffoonry*, which run thro' his whole Performance, and which would have opened a large Field for Ridicule, if I had been disposed to take that Advantage against him, the Reader will find I have for the most part passed them by without taking the least Notice of them. And, indeed, I think a Man can scarce be reduced to more miserable Circumstances, as a *Writer*, than to be obliged to have recourse to such Meannesses as these; and it is one of the most effectual Methods he could have taken to expose himself and the Cause he contends for.

I have taken no particular Notice of his Preface, which is only a heap of loose rambling Reflexions on *Superstition*, the *Clergy*, *Supernatural Doctrines*, the Proof from *Miracles*, placing Religion upon *Authority*, *Spiritual Scholasticism*, and *Biblical Infallibility*. These things he frequently repeats in his Book, where I have considered

them as far as is necessary. Nor have I entered on a distinct Examination of his long Letter to *Eusebius*, which I doubt not that *learned Writer*, to whom it is addressed, will call him to an account for, tho' there is very little in it, but what he said before. I shall not detain the Reader any longer here, but refer him for farther Remarks on the Author's Management of his Subject to the *Introduction*; in which I have endeavoured to obviate some general Charges he advances against me; and have laid together several things which lie scattered here and there throughout his Book, and cannot well be reduced to any particular Head of Argument.

I shall only add, that I have endeavoured all along so to order my Answer to him, that it may have something in it worth reading, and which may be of general Use; which a bare *Defence* of myself against his Misrepresentations would hardly have been.

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PAGE 61. r. *superrational.* p. 88. l. 12. r. *there.*
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the believing Hebrews, r. *who seem principally to have been*
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 r. *rigour.* p. 296. l. 7. r. *a better.* — l. 26. d. *to.*
 p. 307. l. 29. add *it.* p. 345. l. 6. r. *signify.*

CHAP. XI.

THE



T H E

INTRODUCTION.

OUR Author is pleased to begin his Introduction with blaming me for having writ a large Book in Defence of Christianity and Revelation, without so much as letting People know what I mean by the Words, what this Revelation is, or what its peculiar Doctrines and Duties are. This is an odd Complaint from an Author who himself talks in a perpetual Confusion concerning Christianity, Revelation, Reason, and moral Truth, and Fitness. He had in his former Book asserted the great Usefulness of Revelation in Aid of human Reason in the present corrupt State of Mankind. And he continues sometimes to express himself after the same Manner. But it is no easy Matter to know what he intends by that *Revelation*, the Usefulness of which he pretends to acknowledge. By *Divine Revelation* he seems frequently to understand no more than the Discovery of Truth to the Mind in whatsoever Way it is made known, even tho' it be by a Man's own Study and Application in the ordinary Use of his natural Faculties. He

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declares, that Reason it self is a *natural Revelation* from God to Man, and the *Revival or Recovery of lost or neglected Truth* may be called a *particular Revelation, or extraordinary Manifestation of Divine Truth*, however a Man received or came by it, whether by the *Strength and Superiority of his own natural Faculties*, or by any more immediate *supernatural Illumination*, p. 25, 26. see also p. 12, 13, 44. But how to reconcile this Sense of Divine Revelation with other Passages in his Book is hard to see. He represents *Confucius, Zoroaster, Plato, Socrates, and the greatest Moralists of the Heathen World*, as having been without the *Light of Revelation*; and that hence it was, that their *best Systems of Morality* were mixed with *many gross Absurdities*. And he represents the great Disadvantage those Nations labour under that *never had the Benefit of Revelation*; among whom he reckons the *Indians and Chinese*; and that therefore none of them could ever draw up as good a *System of natural Religion as a Christian*. See *Mor. Phil.* Vol. I. p. 144, 145. But if by Revelation he meant according to the Notion he now frequently gives us of it, any Discovery or Manifestation of moral Truth, even when acquired by Men's own Study and Application in the natural Use of their Faculties; or as he had expressed it in his former Book, any *rational, moral Truth, that must appear as such to the Mind or Understanding of Man, as soon as it comes to be fairly proposed under its proper Evidence*. See Vol. I. p. 343. I do not see, how he can consistently say, that *Socrates, Confucius, &c.* and the *greatest Heathen Moralists* were without the *Light of Revelation*, or that the *Chinese, &c.* never had the *Benefit of Revelation*? For will he say, that none of them had any Discovery or Manifestation of *rational moral Truth* ever made to them in any Way whatsoever, no not so much as in the natural

Exercise of their own Faculties? But it seems our moral Philosopher has the Privilege of varying the Significations of Words just as it best suits his present Convenience. And if his Answerers happen to take them in *one* Sense, he can easily produce some Passage or other in his Book to shew that he takes them in *another* Sense, and then insult them for not understanding him.

The Reader might, perhaps, think there was Reason to complain of such a Conduct. But he very dextrously turns the Charge upon his Adversaries. He, it seems, needs not particularly explain what he means by *Revelation*, tho' he takes the Word in a very unusual and ambiguous Sense, but they must explain what they mean by the Revelation they contend for, tho' they take it in the common Sense of the Word, and in which it has been always taken in this Controversy. He can call himself a *Christian*, and intend a quite different Thing from what the rest of the World understand by it, and yet must be thought to speak clearly and intelligibly, without explaining himself more particularly; but he has a Right to insist upon it, that his Answerers should tell him what they mean by *Christianity*. And if, to satisfy him, I should tell him what he knew well enough before, that by Christianity I understand those Doctrines and Laws which were taught and delivered by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, and which, there is good ground to believe, were originally given in a Way of *extraordinary* Communication from God himself; and that, therefore, I think my self obliged to regard them, not merely as the Product of human fallible Wisdom and Reason, or as the Dictates of Philosophers and Moralists, but as the Doctrines and Laws of *God*, and to be received and submitted to as of Divine Authority. This will not content this Writer, except I let him know what the several

ral *Doctrines and Duties of Christianity* are. I must be obliged to give him a particular Catalogue of all the *Articles of Religion* which I believe, and of all the *Duties* which I look upon my self obliged to practise. And, if I should do this, he might probably call it *Preaching*, which, with him, is enough to discredit the best Discourse in the World; or compare me, as he is sometimes pleased to do, to a *Child* saying his *Catechism*.

In the mean Time, he is so kind as to tell the World, what is not that Faith I contend for. It is not that *grand essential Article of all religious Faith, that God is, and that he is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him. The filial Love and Fear of God, and the brotherly Love of Mankind, grounded upon the firm Belief of all the Divine Perfections, and particularly a Trust in God, as the Rewarder of good, and Punisher of bad, Men; this, he says, is no Part of that Faith which I oppose to Infidelity, nor has my anti-infidel Faith any Relation to, or Connexion with it.* This is very strange. That a Man should believe the Scriptures to be a *Divine Revelation*, where all these Things are most clearly and fully revealed, most strongly established, and most pathetically enforced; and yet this, his Belief of the Scriptures, have no Relation to, or Connexion with, the Belief or Practice of those Things, which are there so expressly taught and enjoined. But our Author presumes, that a Man may have this Faith, and yet be, in my Opinion, an *Infidel, an Enemy to Religion, and a wicked Opposer of Revelation*, p. 2. I must own, that it is my Opinion, there are very few that really believe and practise according to the Faith he here describes, taken in its just Extent, that are Enemies to the Scripture-Revelation. But it hath often been observed, that many of the Enemies of Revelation screen themselves under the Pretence of standing

up for *natural* Religion, who, at the same Time, when they have come to explain themselves, it hath appeared that they have been for subverting some of the main Principles and Obligations of it. And this Writer must pardon me, if I cannot think him any great Friend to the Faith and Practice which he here describes, who uses his utmost Endeavour, and that with all the Arts of Misrepresentation and Calumny, to expose the Scriptures to the Ridicule and Contempt of Mankind. The Effect of which would be mightily to weaken the Force of those Principles and Duties among the People. One of those Principles, as he himself here represents them, is, that God is the *Punisher of wicked Men*; and yet, if we may judge from several Passages, both in his former Book and in this, if he came to explain himself, he would so manage the Doctrine of future Punishments, as to set wicked Men, in a great Measure, free from those Terrors which the Representation made of them in the Gospel tends to inspire them with.

This general Account of his Faith he seems wonderfully to value himself upon; for he repeats it in his Preface, and in several Parts of his Book. But there is no mighty Thing in this for any Man to boast of, as if he was bringing some important Discovery to Mankind. It is the easiest Thing in the World to talk in this general Way; and is of little Use, and gives little Direction either in Doctrines or Morals. Yet this loose and *general* Account of Religion is, I suppose, to serve instead of Scripture, and must be of greater Use to instruct the People in Religion and Morals, and to engage them to the Performance of their Duty, than the excellent *Doctrines* and *Precepts* of holy Writ, whereby we are particularly instructed what we are to believe, and what we are to practise, and have

our Duty enforced upon us with the most powerful and important Motives.

He next goes on to inform the Reader, what that *Faith* is which I contend for, and which I would declare to be necessary and fundamental to Christianity, if I had but the Courage and Honesty to speak out, and that is, a firm and indubitable Persuasion, that the whole Jewish and Christian History, contained in the Books of the Old and New Testament, is infallible, and certainly true, especially that Part of it which relates to Prophecy, Miracles, Ghosts, Apparitions, and other supernatural and superrational Facts, p. 2. I do not know what Business he has here to bring in Ghosts and Apparitions, except that he thought it would make a ridiculous Sound in the Ears of some Persons. However he lets us plainly know, that the Scripture-Miracles and Prophecy have the same Weight in his Esteem as the Stories of Ghosts and Apparitions, which I presume are of no great Credit with him. But he adds, that since the Historians in all this were immediately inspired, and so far under the Direction of the Holy Ghost, that they could not err, to doubt, or to reject any Part of it, would be to reject the whole, and overturn all Revelation. This, he says, he takes to be the Faith which I oppose to Infidelity; and that every Man, that does not believe all this, I account an Infidel. Now to satisfy him, that I am not quite so narrow as he takes me to be, I will tell him, that if any Man should be of Opinion, that in some Facts related in the sacred Writings there are Mistakes, whether owing to the Negligence of Transcribers, or even in some smaller Instances to Inadvertencies or Forgetfulness of the original Historians, or if he should doubt of some particular Books belonging to the sacred Canon, tho' I should think him mistaken;

yet if at the same Time he believed the *Fidelity* of the sacred Historians, and the Truth and Certainty of all the main *Facts* whereby the Christian Revelation was attested, and did accordingly receive the *Doctrines* and *Laws* there taught and enjoined as a Revelation from God, and consequently as of Divine Authority; I would be far from branding him as an *Infidel*, or an Enemy to Divine Revelation. But if a Man should declare that we have no Proof that the *main* Facts whereby the Scripture was attested, were really done; or that if they were done, they can furnish no *Proof* or Evidence at all of its Divine Authority; that the *Old Testament* is a Scheme of Superstition and *Imposture*; and that the *New Testament*, as we now have it, is a Jumble of *inconsistent* Religions; that *Jesus* was not the *Christ* foretold by the Prophets, tho' he himself, and all his Apostles after him, declared him to be so; that the Apostles preached *different* Gospels; and that the Accounts of Facts, or of Doctrines and Laws, given by Christ's own Disciples, are not to be *depended* upon; any Man that should assert this, and with his utmost Art and Malice set himself to expose and blacken the sacred Writings, and the Characters of those that writ them; and yet all the while, with a grave Face, call himself *Christian*, yea, and face the World down, that he is a better Christian than those that receive the Scriptures and the Doctrines taught by Christ and his Apostles as of Divine Authority, must have no small Share of Assurance, and presume very much upon the Indulgence or the Stupidity of Mankind.

But our Author urges, that *nothing can be plainer than this, that there is no such Thing as Historical Infallibility, but that all Men are liable to Error, not only in remote and supernatural Events, but even with Regard to the most common Affairs and*

Things near at Hand. And he thinks I ought to have proved this *Infallibility*, at least, with Respect to the sacred Historians, and not have supposed it, as I have done all along, p. 3. But if the extraordinary miraculous Facts, whereby the *Mosaical* and *Christian* Revelation is attested, were of such a Nature, that those, that were Witnesses to them, could be as sure of them as any Man can be of what he hears and sees, and, consequently, could not be deceived or imposed upon themselves, in the Facts they relate, without renouncing the Testimony of all their *Senses*; and if, at the same Time, it can be shewn, that we have the highest Reason to think that they were Persons of great *Probity* and *Simplicity*, and who had no Intention to deceive others; yea, and that, as the Case was circumstanced, it was not in their *Power* to have imposed those Facts upon the World if they had not been true; this lays a just Foundation for depending upon the Accounts they give as certain and true. And that this is the Case with Regard to the extraordinary Facts done in Attestation of the *Mosaick* and *Christian* Dispensation, I have not merely supposed, but proved, at large, elsewhere *. And when to this it is added, that the Persons, by whom those Accounts are given, gave the most manifest Proofs of their being under an extraordinary *Divine Guidance*, which has been shewn to be the Case of *Moses*, and of the *Apostles* too †, to whom our Saviour had promised his Spirit to guide them in what they testified concerning him, and to bring Things to their *Remembrance*; then there is a sufficient *Historical Infallibility*, if this Author is resolved to use this Word, for us reasonably to depend upon.

* See *Answer to Christianity*, &c. Vol. II. Chap. 2.

† See *Divine Author*, p. 19, 30, 371, 372, &c.

There is no Occasion, therefore, for the great Concern this Writer, in his laudable Zeal for Christianity, expresses, least this should be a placing Religion upon a *very weak, precarious, and uncertain Bottom*. He is afraid, good Man, this will give *Advantage to Atheists and Infidels*; because if any plain Instances can be brought of Errors, Mistakes, or Inconsistencies, in the sacred Writers, it will be enough to set aside their Inspiration, and immediate Divine Authority. For if they were not infallible in one Case, they might not in another; and if they were not immediately inspired in Historical Matters, who can prove that they were in Doctrinals? And then he observes, that such are the wretched Shifts to which those must be driven, who place Infallibility and Certainty in any Thing else, but the necessary immutable Truth, Reason, and Fitness of Things, p. 3. This, it seems, and not Historical Infallibility, must be the Rock upon which Christ has built his Church, and against which all the Powers of Earth and Hell cannot prevail, p. 4.

Christianity surely is very much obliged to this Writer, who is so mightily concerned to take it off the uncertain Bottom of the Writings of the Apostles and Prophets, and is for placing it upon an impregnable Rock, against which Earth and Hell cannot prevail, viz. *the eternal, immutable Reason and Fitness of Things*, in which alone Infallibility and Certainty can be found. I wish he had more distinctly explained what this Reason and Fitness of Things is; and what this Infallibility is, that he supposes to lie in this Fitness of Things. Does he mean an Infallibility in our Judgments concerning it? or, that we do of our selves certainly and infallibly know the whole Fitness of Things as far as relates to us? This is scarce consistent with what he himself, elsewhere, acknowledges, that *human Reason*,

son, in *Matters of Religion*, had been, in a great Measure, lost amidst the general Ignorance, Superstition, and Idolatry of Mankind, p. 55. And if so, I cannot but think, it must be a mighty Advantage to have the Truths, relating to Religion, cleared and confirmed to us by a Divine Authority and Testimony. And that the Bulk of Mankind would be in much greater Danger of erring and going wrong, if left to themselves to collect the whole of Religion, and their Duty, as well as they could, from the Nature of Things, by their own Reason, than if they had the Doctrines and Principles of it laid before them, and the Duties of it enforced upon them in plain Propositions, contained in Books written under the Guidance of the Divine Spirit.

But here, it seems, the Danger lies, in supposing that the Scriptures were written by Divine Revelation or *Inspiration* from God. He affects to be in a Doubt, whether I will dare to take upon me to assert this. And he argues against it thus: "If the Revelation consists in the moral Doctrines and Obligations of Scripture, all Morality will be Revelation; or if it consists in the Historical Facts, all History will be Revelation. But if it neither consists in the moral Doctrines, nor Historical Facts, I wonder where he will find it. At this Rate he (speaking of me) must go out of the Bible, and look for his Revelation somewhere else, p. 6." This, it must be owned, is very acutely argued, and may serve as a Specimen of the Clearness and Sagacity of this Writer. But it doth not follow, that if I believe the moral Doctrines of Scripture to be by Divine Revelation, and the *Historical* Accounts of the extraordinary Facts there contained, to have been written under the unerring Guidance of the Divine Spirit, that therefore I must believe all Morality, and all History, to be Revelation; except it can be proved, that

I have the same Reason to believe all other Writers of Morals or Doctrines in Religion to have been extraordinarily *inspired* by God, as I have to believe that *Moses* and the *Prophets*, or that *Christ* and his *Apostles*, were so; and that all other Historians were *equally* under a Divine Guidance as those who writ the Accounts of the Facts in the Law and Gospels. And when the Author proves this, I shall acknowledge the Force of his Argument, and shall look upon him to be a very great Man.

I can see no Reason at all for the extreme Surprise he seems to be in, that any Man should venture to assert that the sacred Writers were under a Divine unerring *Guidance*. Since there is nothing in this but what is reasonable and consistent, supposing such a Revelation to have been really given. For if God designed a Revelation for the Use of Mankind, which he communicated to a Person, or Persons, to be by them published to the World in his Name, and by his Authority; and if he gave them the most illustrious Credentials, to convince Mankind of their Divine Mission, and enabled them, by his own Divine Power, to work the most extraordinary Miracles, in Attestation of the Revelation they published in his Name, it is but reasonable, to suppose, that he would also (if he were able to do it, which will scarce be denied) guide and assist their Minds in publishing and delivering that Revelation to the World, so as to keep them from Error in delivering it; because, otherwise, that Revelation would not answer the End, nor could Men safely depend upon its Authority, either as to the Doctrines to be believed, or Laws to be obeyed. And upon Supposition, that that Revelation was designed for the lasting Use and Direction of Mankind in succeeding Ages, it is equally reasonable, to conclude, that he would also guide and assist them by his Spirit, in committing that

that Revelation to Writing, together with an Account of the main Facts, or miraculous Attestations, whereby it was originally confirmed and established. An unerring Guidance, in this Case, is equally possible, and equally fit and necessary, as in the other. And it may be said, in some Respects, that it was of *greater* importance to keep them from erring in what was thus written, for the Instruction of all succeeding Ages, than in what they then delivered by Word of Mouth. This is a consistent Scheme, harmonious in all its Parts, and worthy of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness. But to suppose that God discovered his Will, in a Way of extraordinary Revelation, to any Person or Persons, to be by them communicated in his Name, and by his Authority, for the Use of Mankind; and that he interposed, by the most extraordinary and miraculous Attestations, to confirm the Revelation they published, and to engage Mankind to receive it as true and Divine, and, yet, that he did not *guide* and assist them in delivering that Revelation to others, which they received from him, but left them to themselves to publish Falshood as well as Truth, and, at the same Time, still continue to give the most illustrious Attestations to them, and to their Doctrine, whilst they were doing so; or, to suppose, that he guided them unerringly in publishing that Revelation, by Word of Mouth, to that Age, and yet did not assist and guide them in committing that Revelation to Writing with the original Attestations, whereby its Divine Authority was established, tho' it was designed for the lasting Use and Benefit of succeeding Ages; this would be an absurd, *self-confounding* Scheme, and would be to charge the supreme Being with an inconsistent Conduct, which a wise and good Man could scarcely be guilty of.

I am in no great Pain about the Author's *plain Proofs of Errors, Mistakes, and Inconsistencies, in the sacred Writers*, which, he is afraid, *would be enough to set aside their Inspiration, and immediate Divine Authority*; and would give Advantage to *Atheists and Infidels*. Many Gentlemen, of his Complexion, have made Attempts this Way, but they have hitherto failed of making good their Charge. He may, undoubtedly, without great Difficulty, find Objections of this Kind, made ready to his Hand, in several that have gone before him, in this Cause; and he may also, if he pleases, find sufficient Answers made to them.

He goes on to observe, p. 6, 7. That "by Revelation, one would think, should be understood the Discovery of some Doctrines or Duties in Religion that had never been known before, and which were above the Search or Investigation of human Reason. In this Sense it has been commonly represented by the Learned, and conceived and apply'd by the Vulgar and Unlearned." This the Author repeats in many Parts of his Book. He all along represents it as if Revelation were, by those he is pleased to call *systematical Divines*, wholly confined to Things above Reason; or, as he expresses it, p. 55, 56. That they take *Revelation, or revealed Religion*, to be *nothing else but a new set of Doctrines, absolutely above and beyond the Investigation and Judgment of human Reason*. And yet he cannot but know, that as they hold the Scriptures to be given by Inspiration of God, so they look upon the Christian Revelation to contain all the Doctrines and Laws delivered by Christ and his Apostles; among which are many Doctrines and Principles of natural Religion, which are not absolutely above the *Search, Investigation, or Perception*, as he sometimes expresses it, of *human Reason*; though they were greatly

greatly obscured and perverted through the Corruption of Mankind. And it hath always been acknowledged to be one valuable End of divine Revelation, to recover Men to the right Knowledge and firm Belief of those Principles and Duties which, though not wholly unknown before, nor absolutely above the Search of human Reason, yet were *encumber'd* with much Darkness, and had, in a great Measure, lost their *Force*, at least, among the Bulk of Mankind; as well as to discover several Things in Religion, which, though very useful when known, the mere *Reason* of Man could not have known, with Certainty, without such Assistance.

This Writer, indeed, will not allow that any Thing was discovered by the Gospel, but what was as well known before. He observes, That Revelation, as taken for the Discovery of any *new* Doctrines, will have but very little or no Foundation in the *New Testament*. And he then endeavours to shew, that our *Lord Jesus Christ*, as both he and *St. Paul* declare, “came not to set up any
 “ new Religion, or new Revelation, but to restore
 “ the old Religion, and the true *Abramic* Righteousness that had taken Place before the giving
 “ of the Law, and by which *Abraham, Noah,*
 “ *Enoch*, and all good Men, from the Beginning
 “ of the World, had been justified and accepted
 “ of God. And this justifying acceptable Righteousness was the filial Love of God, and brotherly Love to Mankind, &c.” It is very true, that the Faith by which *Abraham* and the Patriarchs were justified, and that of good Men under the Gospel, is fundamentally the same: For Faith, in both Cases, doth include a firm Trust in God, a Belief of the Revelations and Discoveries he makes of his Will, and a Dependence on his Promises, all issuing in good Works and sincere Obedi-

Obedience. But it doth not follow, that therefore there is nothing discovered, under the Gospel, but what was as clearly discovered and revealed to *Abraham* and the Patriarchs before; though undoubtedly the same Faith for which *Abraham* was so eminent, and which caused him to believe in God, and in the Revelations he then gave, would have led him actually to believe in *Jesus Christ*, and to receive the Discoveries he brought, if he had lived after *Christ's* actual Manifestation in the Flesh. But our Author further urges, That “ the
 “ Faith which was intended to be introduced and
 “ established by this new Dispensation, or old Religion revived, was that Faith which makes
 “ and denominates Men *faithful*; and the Want
 “ of Faith or Infidelity, was always the Want
 “ of Faith or Faithfulness, with respect to the filial Love of God, and the brotherly Love of
 “ Mankind, and such Acts of moral Truth and
 “ Righteousness as must flow from it. And that
 “ in all this saving justifying Scheme, there is not
 “ one Word or Title of an historical Faith; and
 “ that no Man was ever blamed or condemned
 “ for not believing the History, &c. p. 8. To open the true Design of this Paragraph it must be observed, That, with this Writer, the Belief of any Facts whatsoever, that are recorded in Scripture, must pass for an historical Faith: And consequently the Belief that there was such a Person as *Jesus Christ*; that God sent him into the World to save Sinners; that he wrought such and such illustrious Miracles, that he taught such or such Doctrines, and delivered such Discourses; that he suffered, and died for our Sins; that he rose again from the Dead, and ascended up into Heaven, and is now in a State of Exaltation, and shall come again the second Time, &c. All this is historical Faith, and therefore, in this Author's Account,
 of

of no Necessity or Importance at all. But whatever he himself thinks of it, he should not pretend to put it upon the World, as if the *New Testament* also supposed this Faith to be of no Necessity or Importance; when every Body knows, that is at all acquainted with those sacred Writings, that *Faith in Christ* is there insisted on as necessary to our Acceptance with God, where the Gospel is published and made known. And how a Man can be said to believe in *Jesus Christ*, and yet not believe the Gospel History, which takes in the Things he said and did, is hard to know. Our Author, in his Letter to *Eusebius*, acknowledges, that the other Apostles and Teachers of the Circumcision urged the Necessity of an actual explicit Faith and Profession of *Christ*; but insinuates, that in this they went much farther than the Apostle *Paul*, who declares, that justifying Faith had been, in all Ages, the same *. But that Apostle expresseth himself as fully and strongly on this Head as any of the rest. Thus he saith to the *Corinthians*, *I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received; and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved. For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which also I received; how that Christ died for our Sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again, &c.* 1 Cor. xv. 1---4. And when he elsewhere saith, *The Word is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart, that is, the Word of Faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness, &c.* Rom. x. 8, 9, 10. I am afraid this great Apostle, for whom this Writer frequently

* See Letter to *Eusebius*, p. 6.

professes a mighty Veneration, must now pass in his Esteem for as great Abetter of Historical Faith as any of the rest. It is true, that we are taught both by *St. Paul* and the other Apostles, that the believing in Jesus Christ, if separated from the Fruits of Righteousness, will not justify or save a Man. But this doth not prove, that that Faith is not necessarily required in the Gospel; no more than it will prove, that it is not necessary to believe a *God* or a *Providence*; because the bare Belief of this, alone considered, will not save a Man.

There is one general Remark that must occur to every Man that reads the Author's Book, and that is, that he, all along, represents his Adversaries as renouncing all Evidence from Nature and *Reason* in Matters of Religion, as putting it solely upon *positive* Authority, and abstracting entirely from all Consideration of the Fitness of Things. This he frequently charges upon me. And in the same Manner he represents his learned Adversary Mr. *Chapman*, as "setting up Miracles as a Criterion of Divine Faith, and of Revelation, above Reason, in Opposition to the Nature, Reason, and Fitness of Things, as appearing to the Understanding, *Lett. to Euseb. p. 29.*" I shall take some Notice of this here, that I may not be obliged to return to it on all Occasions.

I freely grant, and it is granted by every Divine who has wrote in this Controversy, that whatever is proved by clear and evident Reason, from the Nature of the Thing, may be justly received upon the Strength of that Reason and Evidence. But since it is manifest in Fact and Experience, and our Author himself doth not deny it, that Mankind are involved in great Darkness and Corruption, and if left to themselves, are very prone to entertain wrong Apprehensions in Matters of Religion, and to neglect and counteract their

Duty in very important Instances, an extraordinary Revelation from God, in which we are assured of the Truth of Doctrines in Religion, and have the Duties of it enjoined and enforced upon us by the express Testimony and Authority of God himself; would be of signal Benefit, and a great Instance of the Divine Goodness and Compassion towards us.

But, then, supposing such a Revelation really given, there must be some Way of *proving* to Men, that it is indeed a Revelation from God, and to be regarded as of Divine Authority; and that the Persons professing to have received it from God, and who published it to the World in his Name, were indeed sent by God, and did receive those Doctrines and Laws by extraordinary Revelation from him. And here it is that the Proof from Miracles properly comes in, as an illustrious Attestation given by God to the Divine Mission of those Persons, and to the Divine Original of those Doctrines and Laws; and, that, consequently, they are to be received as of Divine Authority. And this Divine Authority, when once it can be proved, would be of equal Use, both to give Men a more certain Knowledge and Assurance even of those Things, which, however, absolutely speaking, they are certainly discoverable by our natural *Reason*, yet in the present corrupt State of Mankind, are encumbered with much Darkness and Prejudices; and also more distinctly to describe and *specify* the Particulars of moral Duty, and give them a greater *Force*, and urge them upon us with more powerful Motives; and, lastly, to *assure* us of Things which it is a great Advantage to us to know; and which yet we could not otherwise have known, or not with sufficient Clearness and Certainty.

It is manifest, that upon this Scheme, we are under no Obligation or Necessity to renounce any
Proof

Proof or Evidence that can be brought for any Principle or Precept in Religion from the Nature and Reason of the Thing. Revelation leaves all the Proofs of Religion drawn from the Nature of Things in their full Force, and in all their Light and Evidence; and adds to them the Attestation of a Divine Authority and Testimony. We have all the Advantage of Arguments from the *Reason* and Nature of Things that this Writer can justly pretend to have, with this farther Advantage, that besides this we have the Assistance of extraordinary Revelation or a Divine *Testimony*, which gives a farther Degree of Certainty and Evidence.

There is, therefore, a perfect Harmony upon this Scheme between Reason and Revelation, and between natural Religion and revealed; tho' this Writer pretends, that in *the Way of spiritual Scholasticism* (as he thinks proper to express it) *natural and reveal'd Religion are two essentially different Religions*, which, he thinks, *looks like a setting up Imperium in Imperio*, p. 54. And tho' I do not take Revelation to be nothing else but *mere natural Religion reviv'd*, yet I look upon it to be an important End and Use of Revelation farther to clear, confirm, and establish the main Principles and Duties of natural Religion. The Question, therefore, between him and me is not, as he is pleased to put it, p. 56. about *rational and sensible Religion*, or whether Sense or Reason are most to be depended upon in Matters of Religion. As if I was for renouncing Reason, and depending only upon Sense in Matters of Religion; or, as if he was for a rational Religion, and I was against it: But the Question really is, whether human Reason *guided* and assisted by an extraordinary Divine Revelation, confirmed by the Authority and Testimony of God himself; or Reason *left to it self*, without that Assistance

sistance be of most Use and Service in Matters of Religion.

This Gentleman seems all along to value himself mightily upon it, that he is for placing Religion upon a firm and immoveable Foundation, the *Reason and Fitness* of Things; and, he saith, that what I mean by Revelation, is a *supposed positive Religion, founded upon mere Authority, without any other or farther Reason*, p. 14. One would think, by his Representation of the Matter, that Revelation, according to my Notion of it, is *merely a positive Religion*, as opposed to that which is founded in the Nature of Things: And that I do not suppose, that revealed Religion hath any Foundation at all in *Nature or Reason*. And so he would pass it upon the World, that his Religion truly is founded in the Reason and Fitness of Things, but that which we plead for is not. I will therefore tell him once for all; that I look upon revealed Religion to have a real Foundation in the Nature and Fitness of Things. For all Truth hath a real Fitness in it, or is agreeable to the Nature of Things. And I am satisfied, that there is a real *Fitness* in the whole Work and Method of our Redemption and Salvation by *Jesus Christ*; that is, that it is really agreeable to the just Order of Things, to the Relations between God and us, to the Honour of the Divine Government and Excellencies, and that it is highly for the Advantage and Happiness of Mankind. But the Question is not, whether that which is true and fit in Matters of Religion is to be admitted, but which is the best *Way* of getting a right Information and Assurance of that Truth and Fitness. And the Way this Writer seems to propose, as far as I can comprehend his Design, is for every Man to collect the whole of Religion, in Principle and Practice,

Justice, from the Nature of Things by his own Reason, independent on all Authority; a Work to which the greatest Part of Mankind are manifestly incompetent. He seems all along to think, that if he can but say, that Truth is founded in Nature, or the *Reason* and Fitness of Things, this is sufficient to shew, that in this Case we are not to be assured of it by *Authority*. But this doth not follow, except it can be proved, that the whole Reason and Fitness of Things is open to us. It is evident, that a Thing may be in it self fit and reasonable, and yet we may not be able merely of our selves demonstrably to prove it to be so, for want of taking in a full View and Comprehension of those Things that are necessary to form a clear and certain Judgment concerning it. And now where is the mighty Advantage of his Scheme, which he extols as of so much Use to Mankind? We have all the Light of Reason to assist us that he can boast of, and are as much at Liberty to make a just use of it in searching and examining into the Reason and Nature of Things: And, besides this, we have the *additional* Light of extraordinary Revelation, or a Divine Authority and Testimony. And I may appeal to the common Sense of Mankind, whether this is not a great Advantage where it can be had. For, surely, it must be acknowledged, that God may ascertain us of Things, which, however, they have a Fitness in themselves, we should not have known, or not have known so certainly, without that Information and Assistance. And that if he assureth us of Things by his own Testimony or Authority, that Testimony or Authority may be safely *depended* upon; and that this would come with a far greater *Force*, and give a more satisfying Assurance and Certainty to the Mind than the Opinions of mere Philosophers or Moralists.

But I shall have Occasion to say more on this Head afterwards, when I come to examine what he offers to shew, that no Authority can be depended on at all in Matters of Religion. And shall now proceed to another Remark, on our Author's Manner of Writing, and that is, his confused *jumbling* together Questions which are entirely distinct, and so perplexing and confounding the Debate. Whether this be owing to a Confusion of Things in his own Understanding, or to Art and Design, or to both together, I shall not determine; but, to whatsoever it is owing, is not a very proper Way of Writing for an Author that sets up to enlighten Mankind in Things of *the utmost Consequence in Religion*.

In p. 45. He pretends to state the Question between him and me. He saith, *the only Question between us is concerning the Principal Characteristic, or Medium of Proof, by which we are to perceive or judge of Divine Truth, or of Truth as coming from God.* And then he adds, *Here the Author (speaking of me) seems to think, that human Testimony and Authority, weak and fallible as it is, yet is both sufficient, and the only Means of conveying such Truth to us, who cannot pretend to any immediate personal Inspiration or Revelation in the Case.* But it is certain (says he) *that Divine Authority, as founded upon human Authority, must be liable to all the Weakness, Uncertainty, Failures, and Imperfections of such human Authority. Since the Superstructure can never be stronger than the Foundation, nor the Conclusion clearer than the Premises from which it is drawn.*

All the Strength of this lies wholly in the Obscurity of it, and in *jumbling* Things together, which are of distinct Consideration. It is manifest that he here confounds the Questions, concerning the original *Proofs* of a Divine Revelation, supposed

posed to be given in former Ages, and concerning the *Means* or Manner of conveying that Revelation with those Proofs to us. But these are distinct Questions, and to be considered distinctly.

It is one Question, how we come to know that the Christian Religion, as preached by *Christ* and his Apostles, came originally from God in a Way of extraordinary Revelation; and the Answer to this is, that it came attended with such a Series of illustrious *miraculous* Attestations as gave a full Testimony to the Divine Mission of the Persons by whom it was published, and to the Truth and Divine Original of the Doctrines and Laws. But it is another Question, what Ground we have to think, that that original Revelation, or the Doctrines and Laws, together with an Account of those extraordinary miraculous Attestations are safely *transmitted* to us, in such a Manner, that we may have a reasonable Assurance, that they are the Doctrines and Laws that were originally given, and that these Facts were really done.

These Questions were distinctly treated in the Book he pretends to answer; the former, p. 16, &c. the latter, p. 36, &c. But this Writer, whose Advantage lies in perplexing Matters, perpetually confounds the Question concerning the *Means* of conveying a Revelation to us, with that concerning the proper *Proofs* of its original Authority; as if because the Writings, in which that original Revelation is contained, are conveyed to us thro' the Hands of fallible Men, therefore the *Divine Authority* of that Revelation is founded upon *human Authority*, as a *Superstructure* upon its *Foundation*, and a *Conclusion* upon the *Principles from which it is drawn*.

But it is evident to every one, that the Question whether a Writing or Law be *faithfully* conveyed to us, is one Thing, and the Question concerning the

the *Authority* of that Writing or Law, and the Grounds of its Obligation, is another. That which gives a Law its Authority, is its having been enacted by the *Legislature*. Let us suppose such a Law committed to Writing; and that an Age or two after, some Person is accused for transgressing that Law. He denies its Authority. Why? because it comes to us thro' the Hands of *Printers, Clerks, Keepers of Records, &c.* and these are not Legislators, nor can pretend to any Authority to make Laws; and the Authority of those Laws must depend wholly upon the Authority of the Persons by whom they are conveyed to us. *For it is certain that the legislative Authority, as founded upon the Authority of Printers, Clerks, &c. must be liable to all the Weakness, Failures, &c. of their Authority, and can be of no other or higher Kind than their Authority is; since the Superstructure can never be stronger than the Foundation, nor the Conclusion clearer than the Principles from which it is drawn.* I doubt this Way of arguing would hardly be admitted in our Courts of *Judicature* as sufficient to set aside the Authority of our Laws; and if any Man seriously made such a Plea as this, he would hardly be judged to be in his right Senses. But any Kind of Reasoning will go down, when brought against the Authority of Divine Revelation.

It is on the same confused Jumble of Things that that Censure is founded which he passes upon me, p. 50. That my *Scheme necessarily leads me to place the most important, or Divine Truth upon the Foot of human fallible Authority.* And every where, thro' his whole Book, he insists upon it, as if this alone was sufficient to destroy the Authority of the Scripture-Revelation, that it is transmitted to us thro' the Hands of fallible Men; and that to lay any Stress upon the Authority of a Revelation
that

that is thus conveyed to us, is to lay the whole Stress of Religion on fallible human Authority. But if the original Revelation, when first given and published, was of Divine Authority, and if that Revelation was committed to Writing, and we have sufficient Evidence that that original Revelation is safely transmitted to us without any material Corruption or Alteration, then it is as much of Divine Authority now as it was at first, and we are as much obliged to receive and submit to it, as if we had received it immediately from the Persons by whom it was first published in the Name of God. A Revelation or Law, if it had any real original Divine Authority, does not lose that Authority by being committed to Writing. Nor does its Authority depend on the *intermediate* Conveyers, but on the Proofs of its having been *originally* given by Revelation from God, as the Authority of a Law, formerly enacted, depends not upon the Persons, thro' whose Hands it is transmitted to us, but upon its having been originally enacted by the *Legislature*. It is, therefore, to no Purpose to object, as this Writer does, *p. 13.* That we cannot depend upon that Revelation, *because the intermediate Conveyers, as not being inspired or infallible themselves, might mistake the Sense of the first Promulgers, or give us a wrong Account of it, p. 13.* For if the Writings of those first Promulgers are conveyed safe to us, then it is nothing to us whether the intermediate Conveyers be fallible or not; for in that Case we judge of the Sense of the first Promulgers, not by the Opinion of the *intermediate* Conveyers, but by the very Words of the *original* Promulgers committed to Writing; and in that Case may as properly be said to have that Revelation in our Hands, and may as properly be governed by the Doctrines and Laws of it, as if we had lived in the Age when it was first promulgated, and

and had then heard it published by Word of Mouth.

That an original Divine Revelation may be transmitted to us thro' the Hands of fallible Men, in a Manner that may be safely depended on, was shewn in my former Book, p. 37, &c. And his learned Adversary, Mr. *Chapman*, has considered this more largely and fully. To all which this Writer has nothing to oppose but general Clamours, which he repeats on all Occasions, about the *Uncertainty and infinite Confusion of History*, and *fallible human Testimony*. This may possibly take with some that will not give themselves the Trouble of thinking, and are carried away by mere Sounds; but cannot have any Influence on Men of Sense. It will easily be allowed this Writer what he wisely observes, that all *Men are liable to Error*, and that *even with Regard to the most common Affairs and Things near at Hand*, p. 3. But does it follow, that, therefore, no Man can ever be *certain* of any Thing; no, not even of what he hears or sees? Men may be deceived by human Testimony, but does this prove, that, therefore, no human Testimony can ever, in any Case, be certainly depended on? I know it only by the Testimony of fallible Men, that there is such a Place as *Paris* or *Rome*, or such a Part of the World as *America*, for I was never there; and yet I am as reasonably certain of this as I am of my own Existence. It is only by what the Author calls *human fallible Testimony* that I believe any past Facts whatsoever; that I believe there was such a King as *Charles* the First, and that he was beheaded, or that there were civil *Wars* between King and Parliament, or between the Houses of *York* and *Lancaster*, and yet I have as little reasonable Ground to doubt of them as if I had lived in those Times, and seen those Events my self. It is undeniably evident, that the
most

most of our Knowledge does, and in the present State of Mankind must come in this Way; and that, without it, no Advantage could be made of the Knowledge, Experience, and Observations of past Ages. It is in this Method that all our Laws, Records, &c. are conveyed. And why then should it be thought absurd, that Writings, containing an Account of Doctrines or Facts, relating to Religion, should be also transmitted in this Way; that is, in the only Way of Conveyance, that in the present Constitution of the World, and of Mankind, is left for transmitting any past Writings, Laws, or Facts, to succeeding Ages; and which in many Cases may be so circumstanced, that it would be a ridiculous *Scepticism* to doubt of the Certainty and Safety of the Conveyance.

I would, therefore, advise this Writer not to trouble the World more with his general confused Clamours about *fallible human Testimony*, except he will lay it down as a Principle that human Testimony, that is, the Testimony of Men, who are in themselves fallible, can in no Case be certainly depended upon. And whenever he shall undertake to prove this, I will undertake to shew his Absurdity. But if human Testimony may give a reasonable Certainty, and be depended on in many Cases; and, particularly, if Books written, and Accounts of Facts done, in past Ages, may be transmitted to us in such a Manner, that no Man can reasonably doubt that these Writings are safely conveyed, and that these Facts were really done, then his mere crying out, that they are transmitted by human Testimony, and that the intermediate Conveyers were fallible, is all weak, impertinent Harange, and proves nothing at all. It has been often shewn, with great Evidence, that the Conveyance of the sacred Writings is such as may justly be depended on; and that we have all the Assurance, that can be reasonably

bly desired, that they are transmitted safe to us, without any material Corruption, either in Doctrines or Facts. If he would argue to the Purpose, let him answer what has been offered on this Head, and produce his Proofs, to shew that the Conveyance is uncertain, and not to be depended upon. But this, I doubt, we are never to expect from this Writer. If he cannot carry his Point by general Clamours, he has done his best, and you are to expect no more from him.

I shall conclude this Introduction with taking Notice of a Passage which our Author hath, p. 44. where he pretends to sum up the whole Argument of my Book. He there observes, that my whole Book, as to the argumentative Part of it, may be reduced to this one Syllogism.

“ Whatever God has commanded must be reasonable and fit, and ought, consequently, to be done
 “ on the sole Foot of his Authority, abstracted
 “ from any prior Reason or Finess of Things, as
 “ appearing to the Understanding.”

“ But God has commanded some Things purely
 “ indifferent in their own Nature, so far as we can
 “ see, and other Things which must appear unreasonable to our weak Understandings, abstracted
 “ from such immediate Divine Authority.”

“ Therefore Things indifferent in themselves,
 “ or which otherwise might appear unreasonable
 “ and unfit to mere human Reason, may be reasonable, fit, and necessary by Divine Authority.”

Any one that had not read my Book, and was to form an Idea of it, from the Account this Writer here pretends to give of it, would imagine, that the main Design of my Book, and what I bent my self laboriously to prove, was, that God may command, and hath actually commanded, Things that appear to us *unreasonable* and *unfit*, and that yet they ought to be done, and to be regarded

garded as *reasonable* and *fit* on the sole Foot of his Authority. The *major* Proposition in this Syllogism, *viz.* That *whatever God has commanded must be reasonable and fit, and ought, consequently, to be done on the sole Foot of his Authority, &c.* I had little Occasion to meddle with, except in the Case of *Abraham*. And there, also, I mentioned it as a Concession of our Author's own, and a Principle which he himself allowed to be reasonable *. And as to the *minor* Proposition in the above Syllogism, *viz.* That *God has commanded some Things purely indifferent, and other Things which must appear unreasonable, &c.* This, he tells us, is what he *has denied*, as if this was the main Controversy between him and me. It is evident that he here forms his Argument, as if I had not only granted, but affirmed, that there are several Things commanded both in the Mosaical and Christian Dispensation, that *must appear unreasonable and unfit to our Understandings*. But he knows very well, that I was so far from granting this, that on the contrary, the main Design of my Book was to answer the *Objections* he brought against them, and to shew that there is nothing in them that can be proved to be unreasonable or unfit. Nor has he been able to make good his Charge in any one Instance. But this may give us a *Specimen* of the Candour and Justice of this Writer; and by this, and several other Things in this Book, one would be apt to think, that he writ principally for those who should never see or read my Book at all, but take his Word for what is contained in it.

* See *Divine Authority*, p. 155, 156.



CHAP. I.

An EXAMINATION of what the Author represents as the main Principles of his Book. Their Absurdity and Inconsistency shewn. His Account of the Nature of Truth, and the Grounds of its Communicability; and the Attempt he makes to shew that Truth cannot be proved by Authority, considered. That Authority may in many Cases be of Advantage for ascertaining us of Truth, and that a Divine Authority, or Testimony, may be of signal Use in Matters of Religion and Morality. This particularly shewn with Regard to the Christian Revelation.



OUR Author looks upon the main Principles, he had advanced in his former Book, to be so strong and clear, that I could not meddle with the Principles themselves, and dared not to contradict or argue against them directly; and that I have therefore left all the Principles of the Book, which I pretended to answer, in their full Force, p. 6. And he repeats it again, p. 9. That I knew very well that I could not confute any one general Principle or Position in the moral Philosopher, p. 9.

I must confess I am something at a Loss to know what Principles he means. That Book is written in so loose and rambling a Manner, with so little Method or Consistency, that it is no easy Matter to know what are the main Principles of it, and the chief Difficulty lies not in confuting, but in understanding them. If there be any Thing that can be called the main Principle of his Book, it is that concerning the *moral Reason and Fitness of Things*, being the only *Criterion of Divine Truth*, or of *Truth as coming from God*. And this Principle of his is there expressed in so general and undeterminate a Manner, that it is very hard to form a precise Idea of what he means by it. But, however, I endeavoured to confute it as far as I understood it. He repeats this Principle again in his last Book, and expresses it thus, That we have no certain Mark or Criterion of divine or moral Truth, or of Truth as coming from God, and discovering his Will concerning our Duty, but the *moral Reason and Fitness of the Thing, or its Relation to, and Connexion with our Happiness*, p. 12. He thinks it very strange that I should pretend to be under Uncertainty as to the Meaning of this Principle, as if it was one of the most perplexed uncertain Propositions I had ever met with. Now, I must own, I am still uncertain about the Meaning of it. And, I find, his other Answerer, Mr. Chapman, was as much at a Loss what to make of it as my self. That learned Writer has turned the Proposition several Ways, and in every Sense that he could think of has found it to be absurd. The wisest Thing, in my Opinion, our Author could have done, would have been silently to have dropped this Principle, and not have put the World in Mind of it any more. But, without taking the least Notice of what had been offered against it, he securely repeats it, or refers to it, on all Occasions,

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in his last Book. I had endeavoured, in the Book he has undertaken to answer *, to put this Principle of his in Terms that might have rendered it something more intelligible; but since he gives me no Thanks for this, but is resolved to go on in his own Way, let us take it as he himself has been pleased here to express it, and see what can be made of it, and wherein its great Strength and Usefulness lies.

The professed Design of this Principle, as advanced by our Author, is to set before us the only, sure, and infallible *Criterion*, by which we are to judge of all Truth whatsoever relating to Religion, and by attending to which, we may be safely and certainly guided what Truths we are to receive as coming from God. Now, this Principle, as here expressed by him, seems to be no Way fitted to answer that Purpose. It is evident (as I had observed in my former Book, *p.* 7, 8.) that there are Doctrines in Religion, and those too of considerable Importance, which we are to *believe*, as well as Propositions immediately and directly relating to the *Duties* which we are to practise. Now this Principle of the Author's, according to the Account he here gives of it, seems only to relate to the latter of these. For the Truth of which he here proposes to give the Criterion, is *divine or moral Truth, or Truth as coming from God, and discovering his Will concerning our Duty*. Where, by *divine or moral Truth*, he seems to understand such Truth as *discovers the Will of God concerning our Duty*; that is, such Truth as relates to the Duties which God requires us to practise. So elsewhere, *p.* 17. he describes *moral Truth* to be the *Reason and Fitness of Actions, as founded in the Nature of Things, and as necessarily connected with,*

* See *Divine Authority*, *p.* 10.

and related to the Happiness of moral Agents; this, says he, is what I, with others, call Divine Truth, or Truth coming from God. And, in this Sense, his Criterion is very defective, and cannot be said to extend to all Truths or Doctrines, and Principles in Religion, but only to the *Fitness of Actions*. And, even with Regard to these, our Author's Principle is far from being clear and certain. For the only Criterion he here lays down, is, what he calls the *moral Reason and Fitness of the Thing*; and this moral Reason and Fitness he explains to be its *Relation to, and Connection with our Happiness*. So that, it seems, nothing is to be admitted as a Proof or Evidence of any Thing's being the Will of God, concerning our Duty, but its appearing to our own Minds or Understandings to be in the Nature of the Thing connected with our Happiness. But here, again, another Doubt arises; what Kind of Relation to, or Connection with our Happiness, a Thing must have, in order to its being morally fit and reasonable. For this Author frequently expresses himself as if he understood it only of a *necessary* and immutable Connection with our Happiness. Thus, p. 16. he describes *moral Truth* to be that which discovers to us the *necessary Relations and Qualifications of Actions as connected with our Happiness*. And, p. 17. That it is the Reason and Fitness of Actions, as founded in the Nature of Things, and as *necessarily connected with, and related to the Happiness of moral Agents*. And he expresses himself, in many other Places, after the same Manner. And then the Meaning of his Principle must be this, that nothing is to be admitted, as true or obligatory, in Matters of Practice and Morality, but what is in the Nature of Things *necessarily connected* with our Happiness; and at that Rate, tho' a Thing may be of great Advantage, and manifestly conducive to our Happiness;

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piness; yet, if it be not necessarily connected with it, it will not be any Part of our Duty. In like Manner he often talks of the *immutable, eternal Reason and Fitness of Things*, and represents this as the same Thing with what he elsewhere calls the *moral Reason and Fitness of Actions*. As if nothing could be fit at all but what is unchangeably fit, or fit at one Time, and in one Circumstance, but what is fit at all Times, and in all Circumstances. And upon this View of his Principle the Design of it is to shew, that tho' a Thing appears to us to be fit as the Case is circumstanced, yet it is not to be done, nor can it be the Will of God that we should do it, except it can be proved to have a natural, unchangeable, eternal Fitness in all Cases, and all Circumstances. But this would be both absurd in it self, as it would exclude several Particulars of our Duty, several Things which, as they are circumstanced, would be of considerable Use and Importance to our Happiness; and would also be contrary to what he himself elsewhere acknowledges. For after having observed, that “all
 “ wise States and Governments have ever found it
 “ necessary to abrogate and alter the old, or to enact
 “ new Laws, according to mutable and variable
 “ Relations and Circumstances of Persons in
 “ Society”; he adds, “ That this will equally
 “ hold good, when applied to the Laws of God
 “ himself. For what God would require at one
 “ Time, and in such particular Relations and Circumstances, he would not require at another
 “ Time, under other Relations, and quite different or contrary Circumstances. See *Mor. Phil.*
 “ Vol. I. p. 207.”

But to give this Author all possible Advantage, let us suppose that his Principle is not to be understood according to the obvious Meaning and Propriety of the Expressions; but, that, when he

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talks of the *unchangeable eternal Reason* and Fitness of Things, he intends also to take in those Things that are not unchangeably and eternally fit, but are only so *occasionally*, and in such or such Circumstances; and that when he speaks of a Thing's being *necessary* to our Happiness, he does not merely understand that which is simply and properly necessary to our Happiness, but that which is *conducible* to it. For so I find he expresses himself, p. 13. where he talks of the *natural Tendency and moral Fitness of Actions as conducive to true Happiness*. Such is the Way of this Writer, as if a Thing's being *necessarily connected with our Happiness*, and its being *conducible* to our Happiness, were Terms of the same Extent and Signification. Tho' the Distinction between them is very obvious, and it is manifest that many Things, which are not *necessary* in the Nature of Things, may yet be *conducible*, and have a Subserviency to promote our Happiness various Ways. And if we take this Principle in this Sense; that a Thing's appearing to us to be *conducible* to our Happiness, is a sufficient and the only Proof we can have of its being the Will of God concerning our Duty, this would be to leave the Doctrine of Morals very loose, and on a very uncertain Foundation. At this Rate, Men are to set up their own Advantage precisely as the Measure of their Duty. It is left wholly to themselves whether and how far they shall obey, *viz.* so far only as they apprehend a Thing to be for their own Benefit, and no farther; and of this every Man is to be Judge for himself. To put all Duty and Obedience merely upon this Foot would go a great Way to *dissolve* all Bands of Government, human and divine; especially considering how most Men are governed in judging of what is conducive to their Happiness, by present Sense.

and Appetite. And even those that pretend to be governed by cool Reason, will be far from agreeing how far Appetite must be indulged or restrained, or what Things are for our Good, or the contrary.

It appears, then, that this main Principle of our Author's, concerning the only infallible Criterion, whereby we are to judge of Divine Truth, as it does not properly relate to Principles or Doctrines (which yet it ought to do, in order to answer the End he proposes by it) but only to the *moral Fitness of Actions*; so when it is applied to this it is very loose, and either will be apt to lead Persons astray, if they have no other Rule to go by in judging of the Will of God concerning their Duty, or will be of very little Use and Significancy. To tell a Man in general, when he wants to know what is the Will of God concerning his Duty, that he must do those Things which are necessarily connected with, or which are conducive to his own Happiness, is not to give him any *certain* Direction in the Knowledge of his Duty; since it is evident that in the present corrupt State of Mankind Men, if left to themselves, are often apt to be greatly mistaken in judging of their own Happiness, and the Things that are connected with it. Or if we come to the Particulars of our Duty, it may, in many Cases, be hard to convince a Man that what is urged upon him as his Duty is really necessary and conducive to his Happiness; abstracting from all Authority enjoining it. The Author of *Christianity as old as the Creation*, who had also advanced this Principle of judging of our Duty, by what appears to us to be for our own Happiness, in order to put this Rule in Practice, advises Men *so to regulate their natural Appetites, as will most conduce to the Exercise of their Reason,*

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the Health of their Bodies, and the Pleasure of their Senses taken and considered together, since therein their Happiness consists.

This is the Rule he prescribes for instructing Mankind in general, the meanest, the most illiterate, not excepted, in their Duty; as if it were a very easy Thing for the *Vulgar* to weigh and compare all these, and to form an exact Judgment accordingly. I think I may appeal to the common Sense of Mankind, whether they could not much more easily and certainly find out their Duty and Happiness, by some plain express Revelation from God, confirmed by his own Authority, determining the Particulars of their Duty, and instructing them wherein true Happiness doth consist, and which is the best Way to obtain it, than if they were left to themselves to collect it, by considering and comparing all these. I shall now leave our Author to make the best he can of his main Principle, and proceed to some other Things which he seems to lay a Stress upon, as very certain, and of great Importance.

When he talks, *p. 5, 6.* of those Principles of his, which are *so clear and strong* that I could not meddle with them, and dared not to contradict or argue against them directly; one of those Principles, it seems, is this, that *the Divine Authority of any Person or Doctrine cannot be proved from Miracles.* If he had said I had not confuted this Principle, or was not able to confute it, no Body would have wondered at his saying so, because he will never allow that any Man ever did confute, or can confute, any one Principle he has once advanced. But it was certainly wrong to say I never meddled with it, and that I durst not contradict or argue against it directly, when he knows my first Chapter was designed on Purpose against this Principle, and that I there bend my self to shew that Miracles

may be of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, as to yield a *satisfying* Proof of the Divine Mission of Persons, and of the Divine Original and Authority of Doctrines. And whether he has been able to invalidate what I have offered on this Head, will appear, when I come to consider what he has advanced in this Book to the contrary.

Another of his Principles, which are too clear and strong to be contradicted, as laid down in the forecited Passage, p. 6. is this, That *the Truth, Certainty, and Importance of the Doctrines, prove the Authority of the Person as Divine, but not the Authority of the Person the Truth of the Doctrines.* This Principle, which he will have to be so clear and strong, that no Body dare attempt to confute it, is expressed in so confused and ambiguous a Way that it is no easy Matter to understand it.

What does he mean by the *Authority of the Person as Divine*, which the *Truth and Certainty of his Doctrines is to prove*? Does he mean, that where a Person professing to be extraordinarily sent of God, teacheth any Doctrines that upon Examination appear to be true, and of Importance to Mankind, this is to be regarded as a Proof that he is indeed extraordinarily sent of God; and that because of the Certainty and Importance of some Doctrines he delivers, we may safely, upon his *Authority as Divine*, receive other Doctrines, which may, perhaps, be in themselves true, but which do not appear to us to be certainly true by any Arguments drawn from the Nature of the Thing, and of which we have no other Proof but his Authority? This, to be sure, he will not allow. Or, is the Meaning this, that as far as we can prove by Arguments drawn from the Nature of the Thing, that any of the Doctrines that Person advanceth are true, and certain, and important, so far we are to believe him in the right, and that he had an Authority

thority to declare those Doctrines, as every Man hath to speak Truth? And then this Principle, that the *Truth and Certainty of the Doctrines proves the Authority of the Person as Divine*, is to be understood thus, That when a Person teacheth any Doctrine, which I find by my own Reason to be true and important, and agreeable to the Will of God, I am to believe that in that Instance he speaks what is true and important, and agreeable to the Will of God; and this I may believe, and yet in other Instances think him not to be depended on at all. And this is a very pleasant Way of proving a Person's Authority to be *Divine*, since when I have proved it, his Authority is to pass for nothing, and I am to believe nothing upon his Authority at all. For I am to believe him no further than he can prove what he says to be true from the Nature of the Thing: Which is to allow him no greater Credit and Authority, than we are willing to allow to the greatest *Liar*; that is, let him prove what he says to be true, and we will believe him. This Principle of our Author's, therefore, as far as I can understand it, really amounts to this, That whenever I know a Man speaks Truth, I must believe he speaks Truth. A very undoubted Principle, and which tends very much to the Instruction of Mankind, and to enlighten the Subject before us. However, he may have this Satisfaction in it, that it is a Principle which he may enjoy to himself, and in which no Mortal will dare to contradict him.

It will be allowed that whatever we know to be true, by Arguments drawn from the Nature of the Thing, we must believe to be true; but then the Question still remains, are we never to receive any Thing upon any *Authority* at all? And, as far as I can understand this Writer, according to him, we are never to receive any Thing at all as true, upon any Authority whatsoever, human or divine, or upon any

other Foundation than its own intrinsic Evidence. Indeed, in his former Book, he seemed to allow, that the *Authority* of God might, in some Cases, be a Reason for believing a Thing, tho' we had no Manner of Proof from the Nature of the Thing; as in the Case of immediate Inspiration. *If God speaks to me immediately and directly*, says he, *I believe him upon his own Authority*, p. 82, 83, 84. He makes an Appearance of saying the same Thing in some Passages of his present Book, particularly p. 44. where he seems to allow, that in Case of immediate Inspiration, if God should command any Thing that appears to be ~~such~~, *unreasonable, and unfit to mere human Reason*, it must be done on the sole Foot of his Authority, abstracted from any prior Reason or Fitness of Things, as appearing to our Understanding. But it is evident that he cannot say this in Consistency with these Principles which he here asserts to be *so clear and strong* that they are not to be meddled with or contradicted, and which he represents as the main Principles of his Book. For in the Place already cited, viz. p. 6. he lays it down as an undoubted Maxim, *That Truth is prior in Nature to all Authority, and therefore Authority cannot be the prior Ground and Reason of Truth*. He has it over again frequently in his Book, particularly, p. 21. where after having said, that *no Authority, divine or human, can prove it self*, he adds, *that it is very plain that Truth is, in its own Nature and Reason of Things, prior to all Authority, and therefore cannot depend upon it, or be proved by it*. And, again, p. 23. *What is true in Nature and Reason, as all Religion must, cannot depend on any Authority, since Truth is, in its own Nature, prior to all Authority, and without it no Authority can be proved*. From which Passages it is evident, that his Assertion, if it holds good at all, will hold with

with Regard to all Authority, divine and human. *Truth is prior in Nature to all Authority*, human or divine; from whence he infers, that, therefore, it cannot *depend upon it*, or be *proved by it*. So that, according to him, no Truth can be proved by any Authority at all; or, which is the same Thing, we cannot be ascertained of any Truth by any Authority at all, whether of God or Man; and, consequently, if *God should speak to me immediately and directly*, I am not to *believe him upon his Authority* (which yet this Author allowed we ought to do) because *Truth is prior to all Authority*. This, it seems, is one of his clear and strong Principles, which entirely subverts his own Concessions, and which I did not directly meddle with before, because I did not understand it, nor had he so plainly avowed it before to be one of the main Principles of his Book.

But let us now venture to examine it. Truth (says he) *is prior in Nature and Reason to all Authority*. If the Meaning be, and it is the only Sense in which it can be admitted, that a Thing must be true in it self, before any Authority can shew it to be so, this will be easily owned; but it is nothing at all to the Purpose. For the Question is, supposing a Thing to be really and in it self true, by what Means may we come to *know* that it is true; and whether Authority may not, in some Cases, be a proper *Medium* for ascertaining us of the Truth of a Thing, which we could not have known to be true, or not so certainly, but by that Authority or Testimony? This is what this Writer seems to deny. And in this he hath the common Sense of Mankind against him. It is evident, and agreed to, by all that have duly considered the different Ways of conveying Truth to the Mind, that Authority, or a competent Testimony, is, in many Cases, of great Use, and a very proper *Medium*

dium of assuring us of the Truth of Things; and, in some Cases, is the only Way we have of coming to a Certainty about them. Our Author himself owns it with Regard to what he calls *Truth in Fact*, see p. 11, 15. Tho' I do not see but if his Principle, as here laid down by him, be good for any Thing, it will prove, That *Truth in Fact* cannot be proved by Authority any more than any other Truth. For may it not be said, with Regard to this as well as other Truth, that *Truth is prior in Nature to all Authority*? that is, a Thing must be true in *Fact* before any Authority or Testimony can make or shew it to be so: Therefore, according to this Author's excellent Reasoning, that which is true in Fact can never be proved by any Authority or Testimony whatsoever. It were to be wished this Gentleman would produce this Way of arguing to enlighten our Courts of Judicature. If any Witnesses were to be brought for the Proof of any Fact, let those Witnesses be ever so credible, it would be sufficient to destroy all, to urge with Relation to that Fact, that if it be true at all, the Truth of it must be *prior in Nature* to their *Testimony* or *Authority*, and therefore it cannot *depend* upon their *Testimony*, or *be proved by it*; for *no Authority can prove it self*. It is the Truth and Certainty of the Thing it self that must prove the Authority of those Persons or Witnesses, and not their Authority or Testimony the Truth and Certainty of the Thing. But, it seems, this Way of talking, which would be hissed at in other Matters, must pass for *clear* and *strong* in Matters of Religion; and the Persons, that reason at this Rate, must be esteemed Men of extraordinary Penetration above the rest of Mankind.

But since our Author, tho' in Contradiction to his clear and strong Principle, seems willing to allow that, with Regard to *Truth in Fact*, Authority may be of Use, and we may reasonably depend upon

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and, credible Testimony; let us see whether it is not equally reasonable for us to receive some Things upon Testimony or Authority, at least a divine one, in Matters of Religion.

And here I shall consider what he offers on this Head in his first Section, p. 15, &c. where he proposes distinctly to consider the *Nature of Truth*, and the *Grounds of its Communicability*. He pretends there to treat of this Matter with great Accuracy and Exactness, whereas it has been perplexed and confounded by the *Systematical Divines*.

He tells us, that *whatever is true to us, or true to human Understanding, must be either scientifically true, or true in Fact*. It is only with Regard to that which is *true in Fact*, or *Historical Truth*, as he calls it, p. 18. that he there allows any Room or Use for Authority or Testimony. As to *scientific Truth*, under which he comprehends all Truth, *natural and moral*, or religious, it is only *communicable by its own Evidence to the Understanding*, as he expresseth it, p. 11. And here Authority or Testimony, according to him, hath no Place. It is true, he also mentions a *third Set or Class of communicable Truths*, viz. Truths communicable by *Inspiration or immediate Revelation*, p. 18. but he mentions this only as a Thing found out by our *spiritual Scholasticks*, or *systematical Divines*, and will have it to relate only to Things which are absolutely *beyond the Investigation, Perception, or Judgment of human Reason*. And it is evident to any one that has carefully read his Book, that these are Things which, in his Opinion, have nothing to do with Religion at all.

I would observe, by the Way, that we may hence judge of the great Candor and Consistency of this Writer, who tells us, p. 5. "That he had laid it down as a Principle of Reason, which he endeavoured to prove and exemplify throughout

“ throughout his Book, that *natural and revealed Religion, as to their Subject Matter, are one and the same*; and are distinguished only with regard to the different Method of Teaching, or Manner of Conveyance.” Here he expresses himself as if he really acknowledged a true and proper Revelation from God, the Design of which is to clear and confirm the great Truths and Duties of natural Religion; and that this revealed Religion differs from natural Religion in the Manner of its Conveyance. The obvious Meaning of which seems to be this, that whereas the one is communicated to the Mind by the Exercise of our own Reason, in the ordinary natural Use of our Faculties, the other is communicated from God in a Way of immediate Inspiration, or what this Author himself calls *supernatural Illumination*. And, accordingly, he sometimes speaks of the Usefulness of Revelation for clearing and confirming natural Religion, see particularly p. 55. But by comparing this with what he here says, it appears, that this is only designed to amuse the Reader, and to make a shew of saying a Thing that he doth not really believe. For when he proposes distinctly to treat of the Nature of Truth, and the Means of communicating it, he treats *Inspiration and immediate Revelation* as the mere Invention of the School-Divines, and will not allow it to have any Place with regard to the Principles of natural Religion or moral Truth, but only with regard to *Things above Reason*, that is, with regard to Things which, according to him, are of no Use, and have nothing to do with Religion at all.

But let us return to what he offers concerning this *Scientifical Truth*, as he calls it, and under which he comprehends all natural and moral Truth. The general Account he gives of it is this, that it depends upon the abstract Nature and Reason of Things,

Things, as eternally, necessarily, and immutably the same. And he tells us, That the Truths of this class, or such as are scientific, being eternal and immutable, as founded in the necessary Relations of Things, in the Agreement or Disagreement of their Ideas, must appear to all Understandings alike, and always the same, when once they come to be proposed in their natural Order, and perceived by the Mind.

Now this Description which he here gives of scientific Truth will only hold with Regard to some general Principles in natural *Philosophy* or *Morals*; but there are many other Things, and of considerable Consequence, which cannot pretend to that Degree of Evidence, and yet we have great Reason to think them true. It is plain to any one that is acquainted with human Nature, and with the present State of the World, and of Mankind, that by far the greater Part of that Knowledge which is most useful to us, comes not in a Way of *scientific* Evidence and Certainty, but in a Way of *Probability*, which yet in many Cases rises so high, that we cannot reasonably withhold our Assent. And to confine all Truth in Naturals or Morals, as our Author here seems to do, to that which is scientifically true, and *which must appear to all Understandings alike*, as if nothing but what is capable of demonstrative Evidence were to be admitted in Reason or Religion, is to reduce our Knowledge to a very narrow Compass, and under Pretence of setting it on a better Foundation, to discard the far greater Part of it as useless and uncertain.

And even with Regard to Things which, strictly speaking, are capable of being absolutely demonstrated, Authority may in several Cases be of great Use, and may be reasonably depended upon; e. g. With Regard to the Truths and Principles of the *Mathematicks*, and *natural Philosophy*, which he here calls *scientific natural Truth*, it is evident that

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in many Cases Men may come very reasonably to be assured of the Truth and Certainty of some of those Principles in a Way of Authority. No Man would judge it unreasonable for a Person that does not understand the Mathematicks, or not sufficiently, to believe a Proposition that Sir *Isaac Newton* has demonstrated, and which the ablest Mathematicians acknowledge to be so. As to what he calls *scientific moral Truth*, he describes it to be that which relates to *moral Practice*, and discovers to us the necessary Relations and Qualifications of Actions, as they are connected with our Happiness and well-being. And how loose and undeterminate this is, and what little Direction it gives in the true Knowledge of Morals, hath been already shewn. He then goes on to observe that this *moral Truth* comprehends under it the Truths concerning the Being and Perfections of God, and our necessary Relations to him, and the necessary moral Reason and Fitness of the several Obligations towards God and Man arising from thence. And, as far as I can find, this is the only Way he leaves even for the Bulk of all Mankind to attain to the Knowledge of Religion, and the whole of their Duty. They are attentively to consider the Natures and Reasons of Things; they are to know the Being and Perfections of God, and the Relations between him and us; they are to know themselves, and the Relations they bear to one another; they are to consider and compare these several Relations, and the Fitnesses and Obligations arising from them; and thus are to collect the whole of Religion, and their Duty, every Man for himself, from the abstract Nature and Reason of Things, independently of all Authority whatsoever, human or divine. But certainly he must know very little of Human Nature, or the present State of Mankind, that can persuade himself that the Generality of Men are fitted for such abstracted Reasoning

soning and Inquiries. And one should think our Author should be sensible of this, who finds Fault with those that extol *the Strength of human Reason in Matters of Religion and Morality*, under the present corrupt and degenerate State of Mankind; and declares, that *the best Systems of Morality*, drawn up by the *greatest Moralists that ever lived*, without the *Light of Revelation*, were intermixed and blended with so much Superstition, and so many gross Absurdities, as quite eluded and defeated the main Design of them. Mor. Phil. Vol. I. p. 154, 155.

The Author of *Christianity as old as the Creation* might consistently enough suppose, that every Man is to be left to collect for himself the whole of Religion which he is to believe and practise, from the Reason and Fitness of Things, independently of all Revelation, and all Authority whatsoever, either divine or human; because he at the same Time supposed, that the Reason and Fitness of Things is obvious to the meanest Understanding; that the whole of Religion, and the Law of Nature, is so clear to all Mankind, even to those that cannot read in their Mother-Tongue, that they naturally understand it, and cannot be mistaken in the Principles or Duties of it. This Scheme is, indeed, contrary to evident *Fact* and *Experience*. But yet it must be owned to be consistent with it self. But our Author, as far as I can understand his Intention, adopts his main Principle, and is for sending every Man to the Reason and Fitness of Things, for finding out the whole of Religion, and his Duty; and yet, at the same Time, would be thought to acknowledge that in the *present corrupt State of Mankind the Law of Nature* is not written with *sufficient Strength and Clearness in every Man's Heart*, as that Author affirmed; and that even the *greatest Moralists that ever lived*, if left merely to themselves, and their own Reason, could not fur-

furnish out a right Scheme of Religion and Morality. But, certainly, if this be a just Account of the present State of Mankind, it cannot reasonably be denied that *Authority*, especially a divine one, may be of very great Use in Matters of Religion and Morality. Even with Regard to Things which, absolutely speaking, are capable of strict Demonstration, an extraordinary Revelation from God, assuring us of them in his Name, and by his Authority, may be of great Use to the Bulk of Mankind; who are not very capable of following these Things thro' a Chain of abstracted Reasonings, especially considering how much they are generally under the Influence of corrupt Passions and Prejudices. Much more will this hold with Regard to those Things, which tho' they have nothing in them but what is agreeable to Reason, yet cannot be proved to be *necessarily* true by Arguments drawn from the Nature of the Thing; of which Kind there are several Things, which it may be very useful for us to get a certain Information of.

Some Things there are which appear certain enough in the *general*, yet when we descend to *Particulars*, there is a great deal of Difficulty in them. Of this Kind is what the Author mentions, *That it is certain, since God is the wise and righteous Governor of the World, he will reward good Men, and punish the wicked, as Reason and Justice requires.* This, he thinks, is a more certain and infallible *Manifestation and Revelation of God to Man than any historical Proof can amount to.* But whatever may be said as to the Certainty of the general Principle, that God will reward *good Men, and punish the wicked, as Reason and Justice require*; yet with Respect to the Particulars comprehended under it, and upon which the Use and Application of that Principle in a great Measure depends; *e. gr.* how far in a Consistency with his

own Wisdom, and Justice, and Purity, God may think fit to *pardon* the Iniquities we are chargeable with, and to *reward* an Obedience attended with so many Failures and Defects as ours is in our present imperfect State; what Kind of *Temper* and *Conduct* it is that will denominate Persons righteous in his Sight, and what that *Righteousness* comprehends under it that is necessary to entitle us to a future Reward; and who those Persons are that shall be accounted *wicked*, and shall be thereby obnoxious to future Punishments; and, finally, the *Nature*, *Greatness*, and *Duration* of the Reward that shall be conferred, and the Punishments that shall be inflicted: These are Things that may occasion great Doubts and Difficulties to a serious and inquisitive Mind. And it cannot reasonably be denied that an extraordinary Revelation, additional to the common Light of Nature and Reason, would be highly useful, in which we might have these Things explained and ascertained by an express Testimony from God.

Again, with Respect to moral *Obligations* resulting from the Relations between God and us, and between us and our Fellow-Creatures, tho' we may have sufficient Evidence as to the Grounds of those moral Obligations in general (which is all that this Author's Arguings prove) yet we may be greatly at a Loss if left to our selves, with Regard to the particular Laws and Duties comprehended under those general Rules. There may be Duties that appear agreeable to Nature and Reason, and the Relations we stand in, and which yet cannot be proved by Arguments, from the Nature of the thing, to be necessarily obligatory. There may be such Objections brought against them, and with some Appearance of Reason, as may mightily weaken the Force and Influence of them; especially if Appetite, and a little worldly Interest, be on

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the other Side. But an exprefs *Revelation* from God, enforced by his Divine Authority, would soon decide the Controversy, and give those Laws and Duties a vast Weight, and overrule the contrary Pretences. And I may appeal to the common Sense of Mankind, whether an exprefs *Revelation* from God himself, declaring what is his Will, and what it is that he expects and requires of us with regard to the Particulars of our Duty, would not be a vast Advantage, if such a *Revelation* can be had; and whether in this Case they would not come far more easily and certainly to the Knowledge of their Duty, than if they were left to collect it, every Man for himself, merely from the abstract Reason and Fitness of Things.

I shall conclude this Chapter with observing, that as this Writer is for discarding all Authority in Matters of Religion and Morality, so he would endeavour to persuade us that the *Gospel* does so too. That our Saviour and his Apostles, especially *St. Paul*, disclaim all Pretence to Authority, and place the whole Proof in the Nature of the Doctrines they taught, which was to make its Way to the Hearts and Consciences of Men, merely by its own Force and Energy, p. 23, 24, 33, 41, 42. Our Author often affects to talk of the *intrinsic Evidence* of the Doctrines of the *Gospel*, and would put it upon the World, as if he was a better Friend to Christianity, who puts the Proof of its Doctrines upon their own *internal immutable Evidence*, than others who put the Proof upon a Divine Authority or Testimony, confirmed by Miracles. But the Design of all this, when examined and compared with other Parts of his Scheme, is plain enough. It is, that no Regard is to be paid to the Authority of Christ as a Teacher sent from God; nor are we to believe any Thing he delivers upon his Testimony as divine. The Doctrines and Laws of the
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Gospel, taught and delivered by *Christ* and his Apostles, are on a Level in Point of Authority with the Dictates of those *Philosophers* and *Moralists*; that never pretended to any extraordinary Revelation. And the People are still left to find out the Whole of Religion and their Duty, from the Reason and Fitness of Things, as they were before. But this is entirely to destroy the peculiar Use and Advantage of the Gospel-Revelation, which was, leaving all the Proofs from Reason and Nature to stand in their full Force, to assure Men of the great important Truths and Doctrines of Religion, and to urge and enforce the Duties and Precepts of it upon them, by a Divine Authority and Testimony.

When our Saviour speaks of a future Judgment, and describes the Process of the great Day; when he assures Men of his own coming to judge the World, and of the Resurrection of the Dead; when he makes the most express Promises and Declarations of the Pardon of Sins, the Terms upon which it is to be obtained, of the gracious Assistances of the Holy Spirit, and of eternal Life to be conferred as the Reward of our sincere, tho' imperfect Obedience; when he proposes himself as the Saviour of Mankind, and urges the most pure and excellent Laws; and self-denying Precepts, &c. does he urge these Things merely by reasoning at large upon them, after the Manner of Philosophers and Moralists, by Arguments drawn from the Nature of the Thing? 'Tis evident, that he assures Men of these Things, and urges them upon their own Consciences in a Way of Divine Authority; as one who spoke in the Name and by the Authority of God himself, and who was extraordinarily sent by him to instruct Mankind; and to whose Doctrines and Laws they were therefore obliged to pay an entire Submission and Regard. And to convince the World that he was indeed sent of God, as he profes-

sed to be, he wrought the most illustrious Miracles
 visibly transcending all human Power, and appeal-
 ed to these Miracles as the evident Proofs of his
 Divine Authority and Mission; and at last con-
 firmed all by his own Resurrection from the Dead,
 and Ascension into Heaven. And his Apostles,
 who were commissioned by him to preach his Gos-
 pel to all Nations, and to teach what he commanded
 them, were also enabled, in his Name, and in Atte-
 station of the Gospel, to perform the most wonderful
 Works, bearing all the Signatures of an extraordinary
 Divine Interposition, for a Series of Years together.
 How great soever the Excellency of Christianity is
 in it self, yet it is plain that it was not by the *mere*
 Force of its own intrinsic Evidence that it prevailed.
 Yea, as the State of Mankind then was, sunk in
 Ignorance and Vice, Idolatry and Superstition, its
 pure and self-denying Precepts, its sublime and
 heavenly Doctrines, the spiritual Worship it intro-
 duced, in Opposition to the reigning admired Su-
 perstitions and pompous Rites of their Ancestors,
 and to the darling Vices, Passions, and Prejudices
 of Mankind, would have proved a great Hindrance
 to Mens receiving it. And he must certainly
 know little of Mankind, that can suppose that such a
 Religion as this, propagated and preached by a few
 poor Fishermen and a Tent-Maker, and urged in
 the Name of a Person that had been ignominiously
 crucified by his own Nation, should be able to
 make its Way, and establish it self in a wicked,
 an ignorant, and idolatrous World, *merely* by the
 Force of Reason; when it had the Power of the
 Magistrates, the Interests and Artifices of the
 Priests, the Eloquence of the Orators, the Learn-
 ing of the Philosophers, the Prejudices of the Vul-
 gar, the darling Opinions and Passions of Mankind,
 engaged against it; and had no worldly Advan-
 tages on its Side; but exposed its Followers to
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Contempt, Obloquy, and Reproach, to the most grievous Sufferings and Persecutions, and even to Death it self. That which chiefly rendred Christianity victorious, at its first Publication, and made Way for its Reception in the World, was the manifest *Proofs* of an extraordinary Interposition from Heaven, and a Divine Power and Authority attending it, and its first Publishers; whereby their Hearers were convinced that they were, indeed, extraordinarily sent of God, and that *Jesus Christ* was what he professed himself^l to be, the great appointed Teacher and Saviour of Mankind, of which God had given Assurance, as by the many illustrious and supernatural Works he performed, so especially by raising him from the Dead.

I doubt not our Author will be ready to charge me here, as he has already done, with *rejecting the internal rational Evidence of the Doctrines as appearing to the Understanding*, p. 51 or 52. But I am far from rejecting or undervaluing any internal rational Evidence that can be brought for any of the Doctrines of Christianity. These are left in their full Strength, and have the additional Attestation and Enforcement of a Divine Authority or Testimony. I am persuaded that none of the Doctrines of the Gospel can be proved to be contrary to any clear Principles of right Reason; and that they are all of an excellent Tendency. But their being agreeable to Reason, or having a good Tendency, will not alone prove them to be true. Thus, *e. gr.* when St. Paul, whom this Author represents as placing the whole Stress not upon any external Proofs, but solely upon the intrinsic Evidence of the Doctrines themselves, when he declares in that excellent Passage, *1 Thess. iv. 14-17.* That those that sleep, or die in Jesus, will God bring with him; that the Lord Jesus will descend from Heaven, &c. and the Dead in Christ shall rise first; and that those

those that *remain*, and are *alive*, shall be *caught up together in the Clouds to meet the Lord in the Air*; and so shall be *for ever with the Lord*: And when in the 15th Chapter of his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, he gives such an excellent Account of the *Resurrection* of the Dead, and of the glorious Change that shall be made upon the Bodies of good Men at Christ's second Coming, and that in a *Moment*, in the *Twinkling of an Eye*; this must be owned to be an admirable Doctrine; it has something in it very noble, and full of Comfort. But no Body will say, that there is any Proof of it from the Nature of the Thing that makes it necessarily true. It may pass for a fine Speculation, but cannot engage or determine the Assent of the Mind merely by its own intrinsic Evidence. But if it comes confirmed by a Divine *Testimony* or Authority, if I consider it as received by extraordinary *Revelation* from God himself, then I regard what before I might wish to be true, as most certainly true, and to be depended on as such.

But our pretended *Moral Philosopher* is for depriving us of this Advantage. He sometimes affects to extol the great Usefulness of the Christian Revelation, for bringing Men to a Certainty, as to several Things of Importance, as to which they were uncertain before. But, at the same Time, he is for utterly depriving it of its proper Authority, as an extraordinary Revelation from God. Whatsoever, therefore, was uncertain to the Reason of Mankind before is so still, since the Testimony of this Revelation can give no additional Weight to it at all. Its heavenly Doctrines are of no more Force than the Speculations of Philosophers. Its Divine Promises are stripped of that which gives them their greatest Weight and Comfort to the Minds of good Men, *i. e.* the Word and *Testimony* of God himself. Its glorious Hopes are greatly weakened,

weakned, and amount to little more than some pleasing Conjectures, which may amuse, but cannot yield a satisfying Certainty. The Force of its Divine Laws, and its powerful and amazing Sanctions, are in a great Measure defeated, and must very much lose their Influence upon Mankind, when instead of being regarded, as bound upon us by the express Authority and Testimony of God, they are regarded as having no greater Authority than those proposed by *Plato*, or any other Philosopher, and which Men will be apt to slight, and think themselves at Liberty to reject, when Appetite or Interest stands in the Way. And this may help us to judge what Obligations the World is under to this Writer, and of what mighty Benefit the Scheme he proposes, must needs be to Mankind,



C H A P. II.

The QUESTION concerning the proper Proofs of Truth, as coming from God, stated. The Author's Ambiguities detected. Our not being able to explain the particular Manner of extraordinary Revelation, or immediate Inspiration, no Objection against the Reality of it. Things originally received in a Way of extraordinary Revelation from God, capable of being communicated to others, to whom the Revelation was not immediately made. Exceptions against this considered and obviated. In what Sense Miracles may be Proofs and Evidences of the Divine Authority of Persons or Doctrines. The true Notion of Miracles, explained. The Propositions the Author lays down relating to them, examined. His Objections against the Proof of Doctrines from Miracles, shewn to be vain and inconclusive.

HAVING considered the general Principles of our Author's Book, and which he repeats and refers to on all Occasions, and particularly his Attempt to shew that no Authority can be of any Use, or is at all to be depended on in Matters of Religion; and having shewn that a Revelation confirmed by a Divine Authority or Testimony, would be of great Advantage in the present State of Mankind; it is now natural to enquire what are the proper *Proofs* whereby we may come to know that such a Revelation is really given,

given, and that it may be justly received as coming from God, and as of Divine Authority. For if we have no Way of proving that such an extraordinary Revelation was ever given, it is the same Thing to us as if no such Revelation had been really given, since we cannot in that Case depend upon its Authority, either with Regard to the Doctrines to be believed, or the Duties to be practised. But we are just left to our selves, as much as if there was no such Revelation at all. Accordingly this is the Point the moral Philosopher appeared to me to labour in his Book ; and I therefore took it, that the Question between us, related to the Proofs or *Evidences* of Truth as coming from God in a Way of extraordinary Revelation. And this was what I considered in my first Chapter. But now I am corrected by this Writer for supposing that in this Debate, by *Truth as coming from God*, is to be understood that which comes in a Way of extraordinary supernatural Revelation. It seems it might be *for my Purpose* to understand it so, but it is *not for his*, see p. 12. that is, it is not for his Purpose to keep close to the Point at all, but to be perpetually shifting and doubling, and perplexing the Question by the ambiguous Senses of the Word *Revelation*, and *Truth as coming from God*. By Revelation he can sometimes seem to understand, what others mean by it, that which comes in an extraordinary *supernatural* Way ; and, at other Times, intends no more by it than any Discovery of Truth to the human Mind, tho' it be made in the ordinary natural Use of Mens own *Faculties*. In like Manner, by *Truth as coming from God*, it seems, he intends any Truth that hath its original from God in any Way whatsoever. And, he supposes, I will not deny, that *all Truth is from God as the only true original Fountain and Conveyer of it*,

it, p. 44. *. But then he ought to consider, that in this Sense, Truth as coming from God, cannot be the appropriated distinguishing Character of what he calls *moral Truth*, which, yet, he every where supposes; for he all along mentions *moral or divine Truth*, and Truth as coming from God, as Terms of the same Signification. But, according to that general Notion of Truth as coming from God, which he advances in the Passage now mentioned, *Mathematical* and *Metaphysical Truth*, all the Truths of natural *Philosophy* may be as properly called *Divine Truth*, and be as justly said to come from God, as what he calls *moral Truth*. But the proper Question between us is not concerning the Eviden-

* It is pleasant enough to hear this Writer complaining of me for using the Words *Divine Truth*, *Truth coming from God*, *Inspiration*, *Revelation*, &c. in a loose declamatory Way, without ever affixing any clear determinate Ideas to them, p. 83. and again, p. 219. That I use these Words in a general, loose, and undefined Sense. Whereas the Charge lies properly against himself. I take these Words in one and the same Sense throughout my Book, the Sense in which they are commonly understood in this Controversy, as signifying that which comes from God in an extraordinary supernatural Way. But he uses these Words in a loose, general, and undeterminate Sense, as taking in all Truth whatsoever, whether it comes in a natural or supernatural Way, in the ordinary Exercise of our Faculties, or by immediate Illumination. And because, in the Question between us, I am not for taking *Truth as coming from God*, in the same loose and general Sense that he does, he thinks fit to represent me as ascribing nothing to God at all, but what is supernatural and extraordinary. He very pertinently observes, p. 82. that all Things come from God, evil as well as good, Punishments as well as Mercies; and that all great Events, and all extraordinary Degrees of Wisdom and Knowledge, especially in spiritual Matters, may be more especially ascribed to him. And, as if I denied all this, he very gravely complains, that it is impossible for him to please me; for he sees I am resolved never to suffer him to have any Thing from God, but that he hopes God will be more merciful to him, if he ascribes every Thing to him, and owns himself to be his Creature, Subject, and absolute Dependant.

ces we may have of the Truth of any Thing which we know by a natural and rational Proof in the ordinary Exercise of our Faculties; but it is really this, Whether there can be any Proofs or Evidences given of Truths coming from God in a Way of extraordinary *supernatural* Revelation; and what those Proofs and Evidences are.

And, with Regard to this, I proposed two Questions to be distinctly considered. The one is, whether those, to whom the original Revelation is immediately made, may have a sufficient Certainty that what they receive by immediate Inspiration is, indeed, a Revelation from God. The other is, whether other Persons, besides those to whom the original Revelation was made, may have a sufficient Ground of reasonable Assurance, that what

For my part, I will be no Hindrance to his pious Resolutions, and should be very glad that he gave the World more convincing Proofs than he has done in this Book, of his ascribing any Knowledge or Abilities he has to God, by employing them in his Service, and in promoting the valuable Interests of Truth and Religion. I am very willing he should ascribe every Thing to God but his Faults, his Falshoods, and Misrepresentations. These I would have him take the Credit and Merit of wholly to himself. And in this very Passage, where he expresses himself so piously disposed, he does not deal very fairly by me. For he would fain have the Reader believe, that I will not allow that any Thing can be said to come from God at all, except it comes in a supernatural Way. And particularly he observes, speaking of me, *This Author cannot admit any Truth to be divine, or to come from God, unless it comes from him immediately by Inspiration or Revelation*, p. 83. that is, because I say, the proper Question between him and me, is not about that which comes from God in a natural Way, and in the ordinary Use of our Faculties, but about that which comes in a Way of supernatural extraordinary Revelation, therefore I acknowledge no Truth at all to come from God in a natural Way. This is our Author's excellent Reasoning, and his candid Way of representing the Sense of his Adversaries. Tho', it must be owned, he is a little kinder to me, p. 44. where he allows, that I *never have denied*, and, he supposes, *I never will*, that *all Truth is from God, as the only true original Fountain and Conveyer of it*.

those Persons published to the World, as by Revelation from God, is, indeed, a Revelation from God, and is, therefore, to be received and submitted to as such. Our moral Philosopher owns, that these are *two very important Questions*, and he promises to attend to my Reasonings upon them the more carefully, because the whole Controversy, between him and me, must, in a Manner, depend upon it, p. 14. With Regard to the first Question, I laid it down as a Proposition that cannot reasonably be denied, *That God can communicate the Knowledge of Things, by immediate Revelation or Inspiration, in such a Manner, that the Person or Persons, to whom such a Revelation is immediately made, may be certain that it is, indeed, a Revelation from God.* This I endeavour'd to prove and illustrate, p. 12, &c. Nor does our Author himself pretend to deny it. He says, he agrees with me, *that God may immediately and directly, if he pleases, communicate his Mind and Will, concerning our Duty and Happiness, to any Man or Number of Men, and enable them to communicate the same to others upon sufficient Grounds of Belief*, p. 15. And, elsewhere, he says, the Question between him and me is not, *whether God may reveal or discover Truth to the Mind in a Way superior to what is common and natural*; for this he allows, p. 44. He grants, that *God may communicate and convey spiritual and divine Truth, either mediately or immediately, as he thinks fit; either by the superior Strength and Extent of Mens own natural Faculties, or by any more immediate supernatural Illumination*, p. 25, 45. From these and other Passages that might be mentioned both in his former Book and in this, it appears, that he himself allows, that *immediate Inspiration, or supernatural Illumination*, is one Way by which God can communicate his Will concerning Truth and Duty to the hu-

human Mind: And, no doubt, he would cry out upon me as egregiously misrepresenting him, if I accused him as denying this. And if it be as he himself expresses it, *supernatural*, it cannot be expected that we should be able distinctly to explain the Manner in which it is communicated. And yet this Gentleman is pleased frequently to urge it as a mighty Objection, that I do not explain the Manner of this Inspiration. He charges me with *talking of Inspiration absolutely in the Dark*, and that *I no more convey any Idea of it than one could to a blind Man of Light and Colours*, p. 82. And that *I cannot tell what I mean by any such supernatural or superational Light*, p. 227. But if he be sincere in the Acknowledgments he makes, that God may, if he thinks fit, communicate his Will to the Mind, by *immediate Inspiration or supernatural Illumination*, he must also acknowledge that it is no Objection against the Reality of it, that we are not able distinctly to explain, or account for the Way in which he doth it. He cannot but be sensible, if he hath carried his Inquiries in these Matters as far as he would be thought to have done, that we are very little able to explain the Operations of our own Minds, or in what Manner Ideas and Notions are impressed and produced there, even in the natural Way. And if no more of these Things must be accounted certain than we can distinctly explain the Manner how they are done, we must be uncertain of our own Sensations. If, therefore, there can be any satisfying Evidence, that God doth communicate himself to the Mind in a Way of immediate Inspiration, or supernatural Revelation, this is sufficient, whether we can explain the Manner of it or no. And of this the Person, immediately thus inspired or illuminated, may have an absolute Certainty, as I have shewn in my former Book, p. 12, 13. Nor does the

the Author himself pretend to contest it. And this is all that properly belongs to the first Question proposed; for what Assurance others may have concerning it, will come to be considered afterwards. But here it may be proper to observe, that this Writer, after having granted, p. 13, 14. That God *may communicate his Will concerning our Duty and Happiness, immediately and directly, if he thinks fit. viz.* as he elsewhere expresses it, by *immediate Inspiration, or supernatural Illumination*; yet when he comes, p. 18. to treat of *Inspiration, or immediate Revelation*, as a Way of communicating Truth distinct from the natural Way, he represents it as the Invention of our *spiritual Scholasticks, or systematical Divines*. And there are two Things he observes concerning it. First, that it extends only to Things which, as he expresses it, are *above and beyond the Investigation, Search, Perception, or Judgment of natural Reason*. And, Secondly, That the Persons that have any such Things communicated to them, by *immediate Inspiration or Revelation*, cannot possibly *communicate* them to others; nor can any Man understand them without a *personal Inspiration, or supernatural Illumination*.

With Regard to the first of these, he plainly abuses those he calls the *systematical Divines*, when he represents them as confining *Inspiration or immediate Revelation* wholly to Things which are absolutely *beyond the Investigation or Perception of human Reason*. For, as I have already observed, all that hold the Scriptures to be written by *Inspiration of God*, do and must maintain, that that *Revelation* extends to the great Principles and Duties of *natural Religion*, as there farther established and confirmed. And that this is one great Use and Advantage of *Divine Revelation*, that it gives us a clearer and more satisfying Knowledge and Certainty even of those Things, which, absolutely speaking, are discoverable

coverable by human Reason. It will, indeed, be easily granted, that this Revelation doth also extend to Things which we could not have discovered by human Reason, if they had not been thus extraordinarily revealed; but when once they are thus revealed, they are as capable of being communicated as any other Truths. Propositions, relating to them, may be communicated in Word or Writing, and may be understood by us, as far as it is necessary for us to understand them, as well as any other Propositions. Nor would it alter the Case, tho' the Subject, to which those Propositions relate, taken in its full Extent, may exceed our Comprehension; for, notwithstanding this, those Propositions may be both intelligible and useful. So it is with Regard even to some of the Principles in natural Religion; *e. gr.* those relating to the Divine *Eternity, Immensity, &c.* There may be Propositions relating to those Things which may be of considerable Use, and are capable of being understood and communicated, tho' the Subject, in its full Extent, is beyond the Reach of our Faculties, and may be attended with Difficulties which we are not able to explain.

But let us see what this Writer offers to shew that these Things cannot be communicated. He begins with telling us, that besides *scientific Truth, and Truth in Fact, our spiritual Scholasticks, or systematical Divines, have found out a third Set or Class of communicable Truths, which are neither scientific nor historical, and which cannot be derived either from our Reason or Senses; and this they call Inspiration, or immediate Revelation, p. 18.* But here he expresses himself with great Impropropriety, and ought not to put this, which is his own Blunder, upon the *scholastick Divines and systematical Men.* None of them ever said, that this *Set of Truths is Inspiration, or immediate Revelation;* but that these

Truths

Truths came originally by Inspiration, or immediate Revelation. He then goes on to observe, that some have asserted the Necessity of a personal immediate Inspiration, or supernatural spiritual Illumination of every Man, in order to perceive and judge of these Doctrines and Truths of immediate Revelation. And these, he says, have been consistent with themselves, and proceeded upon the only Supposition, that can render their Principles so much as intelligible, p. 19. He acknowledges, that others, who would seem more rational, say, That tho' the Doctrines and Truths of pure Revelation could not have been known at first, but by an immediate Inspiration or Revelation from God; yet, when once they are thus discovered and made known, the common Reason of Man may so far perceive and judge of them, as to have sufficient Grounds for receiving and believing them, as coming from God; and depending on Divine Authority, p. 20. This, he owns, may look plausible, and is the common Way of getting off; but he pronounces, that these compound-ing Gentlemen, as he calls them, have been most of all mistaken, and by halving and mincing the Matter, have left themselves no solid Ground or Footing at all, p. 20. This is dictated with a very decisive Air, after our Author's Manner. But let us see how he proves it. He asks, *what this supposed Divine Authority, by which we must judge of the Will of God concerning our Duty, is founded upon?* I answer, that the Divine Authority of Doctrines and Laws, supposed to have been originally communicated by immediate Inspiration or extraordinary Revelation from God, I say their Authority, with Regard to us, is founded on the *Proofs* we have, that the Persons, by whom they were first published, were indeed extraordinarily sent of God, and had them by Revelation from God himself; and if Proofs are given sufficient to produce

a reasonable Assurance of this, which will come to be considered under the second Question, then we may, upon good Grounds, receive those Doctrines and Laws as the Doctrines and Laws of God, or as Doctrines and Laws that came originally by extraordinary Revelation from him; and, consequently, must receive them as of Divine Authority. The Author, next, has Recourse to his great Principle, that it is plain, that *Truth, in its own Nature, and the Reason of Things, is prior to all Authority; and, therefore, cannot depend upon it, or be proved by it*, p. 20. And he has this over again in the next Page. But the Absurdity of this hath been sufficiently shewn. And if this Principle were just, it would prove, that even immediate *personal* Inspiration can give no more Assurance, in Point of Authority, than if it came in any other Way; which, yet, this Writer seems here to allow.

There is another Argument he offers to shew, that the Doctrines, had originally by immediate Revelation, cannot be communicated. *It is certain* (says he) *that Inspiration or Revelation cannot be the Object of our Senses, since no Man has seen God at any Time, or heard his Voice; and it is allowed not to be a Matter of Science, or communicable by any natural Relation and rational Connection of Ideas, as this would make a Part of natural Religion; and, therefore, cannot be known or communicated at all, but by a personal Inspiration, or supernatural Illumination.* And then he adds, that the *Certainty or Communicability of immediate Inspiration, or Revelation above Reason, could never have been thought of, or found out, but by great Necessity, the Mother of Invention*, p. 21, 22. But, here again, he confounds, as he had done in his entering on this Argument, p. 18. *personal Inspiration, or immediate Revelation, with the Truths, the Doctrines and Laws, that came originally by*

Inspiration ; and upon this Blunder of his own the Force of his Argument depends. But tho' the original, immediate, personal Inspiration it self is not communicable, as being a personal Thing, yet the Truths or *Doctrines*, that came originally by Inspiration, are communicable, if those *Doctrines* can be expressed in human Language, or conveyed by Word or Writing. And such are the *Doctrines* and Laws contained in the Scriptures, which are actually transmitted to us in Writing. And as to any Truths, that cannot be expressed in Word or Writing, we shall have no Controversy with him about them. And if the Person that had those *Doctrines* and Laws, by immediate Inspiration or Revelation from God, can communicate them to others by Word or Writing, and, at the same Time, those, to whom they are communicated, may have sufficient *Proofs*, that the Persons, by whom they were originally delivered to the World, had them by Inspiration or Revelation from God, this lays a just and sufficient Foundation for believing those *Doctrines*, and submitting to those Laws, as of Divine Authority.

This, therefore, leads to the second Question, with Regard to which I had laid down this Proposition, *That there may be such Proofs and Evidences given, that Persons professing to have received Doctrines and Laws by Revelation from God, for the Use of Mankind, were, indeed, sent and inspired by him, and did receive them by Revelation from him : Such Proofs and Evidences as make it reasonable for those to whom they are made known, to receive such Laws and Doctrines as of Divine Authority.* And here I particularly observed, that *Miracles* may be so circumstanced as to be sufficient Proofs of the Divine Mission of those Persons, and of the Certainty and Divine Original of those *Doctrines* in Attestation of which they were wrought,

wrought. This is what our Author proposes to consider, from p. 25. to the End of his first Section. But before I come directly to examine what he offers, I shall *state* the Point in what Sense I make Miracles to be the Proofs or Evidences of the Divine Authority of Persons or Doctrines; because this Writer seems greatly to have mistaken or misrepresented it. He saith, speaking of me, p. 30. " This Author " grounds the Whole of Reveal'd Religion upon " the Evidence of Miracles, as a Proof of Divine " Authority, abstracted from, or independent of " any Reason or Fitness of Things, as appearing " to the Understanding by a rational Connection " of Ideas. This is plainly the Author's grand " Principle, and what he has made himself accountable for; or, otherwise, he would not " contradict me." And he all along represents it as if because I made Miracles proper Proofs of Divine Revelation, therefore I entirely *renounced* all Consideration of the Reasonableness and Fitness of the Thing it self, and could not *consistently* ever urge this at all, as of any Use or Weight in judging of a Divine Revelation, or inquiring into its Evidence. And, accordingly, because in my *second* Chapter I offer several Considerations to shew the *intrinsic Wisdom, Goodness, and rational Design of the Law of Moses, and the Fitness of the ritual and ceremonial Part of that Policy to the Circumstances of that People*, he represents this as entirely *overthrowing and giving up the Argument of my first Chapter, concerning Divine Authority, as proved by Miracles, being the only proper and genuine Evidences of Divine Truth, or a Revelation from God*, p. 54. But this is far from being a just Representation of my Sentiments.

In the Passage, cited by this Author, I observed, that " the Reasonableness of a Doctrine " or Law will never *alone* prove, that the Man

“ who teacheth that Doctrine, or bringeth that Law, had it by immediate Revelation from God.” See *Divine Authority*, p. 47. where it is plain, that I do not say, that the Reasonableness of the Doctrines and Laws must not be considered at all, or that it is of no Use to consider it; but that such Reasonableness will never *alone* prove that the Man who teacheth that Doctrine, or bringeth that Law, had it by immediate extraordinary Revelation from God. Accordingly, in the Case there put, I make a Supposition of a Person’s professing to have received Doctrines and Laws by Revelation from God, &c. and mention, among other Things, the apparent *Probity* and Sincerity of the Person’s own Conduct, and the good *Tendency* of the Doctrines and Laws he teacheth; and add, that *this may form a strong Prejudice in his Favour, but doth not alone prove that he received those Doctrines and Laws by Revelation* (that is, by extraordinary supernatural Revelation) *from God himself.* See *Divine Authority*, p. 16. And again, p. 41. in mentioning the Grounds upon which Religion may be received as of Divine Authority, I suppose these Grounds were, *besides the good Tendency of its Doctrines and Laws, the illustrious miraculous Attestations whereby it was confirmed.*

From these Passages it is evident, that tho’ I deny that the Reasonableness of Doctrines and Laws will *alone* prove that the Man that bringeth those Doctrines had them by immediate extraordinary Revelation, yet I do not deny but that it may be very useful to consider the Reasonableness and good Tendency of those Doctrines and Laws; and this may be of great Weight to give the Proof from Miracles a greater Force, and set it in a stronger Light*. For when there is a Body of Doctrines or Laws pub-

* Accordingly I actually make this Use of it in the Case of the Christian Revelation: See *Divine Authority*, &c. p. 22.

lished to the World, by Persons professing to be extraordinarily sent of God, the main Design of which is to promote the Practice of true Piety and Virtue; and they are enabled, in Confirmation of it, to perform the most glorious Miracles visibly transcending all human Power; this good Tendency of those Doctrines and Laws furnishes a strong *additional* Proof that those Miracles could not be wrought by evil Beings; and, consequently, if they are above all the Power of Man, must be wrought by the immediate Power of God himself, or by good Beings superior to Man, acting according to his Direction, and must, therefore, be regarded as yielding a Divine Attestation to the Certainty and Divine Original of those Doctrines and Laws. And such a Divine Attestation or Authority would (as I have already shewn) be of very great Advantage to give Men a more satisfying Assurance even of those Things, which, however agreeable to right Reason, are encumbered with much Darkness and Prejudices in the present State of Mankind, and would give a mighty Force and Efficacy to Laws, which, however good in themselves, might appear contrary to our Inclinations and Appetites, and liable to Objections. Nor would it at all diminish the Force of the Proof given by Miracles to that Revelation, if among those Laws there should be some of a *positive* Nature; and among the Doctrines there taught, there should be some relating to Things, which depending on the free *Councils* of God, we could not have known or discovered, if they had not been thus revealed to us; tho', when they are reveal'd, they are also of a good Tendency, and may be very useful to us. For some Things of this Kind may justly be expected in a Revelation from God to Mankind; and when confirmed by a Divine Attestation, may very properly be received upon that Authority;

tho', without it, we could not have proved them to be *necessarily* true and divine, by Arguments drawn from the Nature and Reason of the Thing.

Having offered this to obviate the Author's Misrepresentations, and to state the Design of the present Question, I shall now proceed to consider the Attempt he makes to shew, that Miracles can, in no Case, be sufficient Proofs of the extraordinary Divine Mission of any Person, or of the Certainty and Divine Original of any Doctrines.

And here I had observed, that the Question doth not properly proceed concerning *all Miracles in general, whether all Kinds of Miracles are Proofs of Doctrines as coming from God; but whether Miracles may not be of such a Nature, and so circumstanced for Number, Grandeur, and Continuance, as to yield a sufficient Attestation to the Divine Mission of the Persons, in Favour of whom, and to the Divine Original of the Doctrines, in Confirmation of which they are wrought; and, particularly, whether the Miracles, wrought in Confirmation of the Mosaick and Christian Dispensation, were not such.*

In order, therefore, to invalidate this, he ought to prove, either that no Miracles can at all in any Case be of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, as to yield a sufficient Attestation to the Divine Mission of Persons, or to the Certainty and Divine Original of Doctrines and Laws; or, he ought to shew, that the Miracles, wrought in Attestation of the Mosaick and Christian Dispensation, were not such. And, accordingly, he has made some Attempt as to both these.

With Regard to the general Question he hath said very little but what is sufficiently obviated, either in my former Book, or in Mr. Chapman's learned Performance, who hath considered the Question about Miracles very fully; tho' this Writer,

according to his laudable Manner, pretends to answer it without almost taking any Notice of what he hath advanced.

He observes, *p. 49.* that *I ought to have given some certain Notion or Idea, or other, of a Miracle; at least, as the Matter stands in my Apprehension.* Mr. *Chapman* has given a Definition of a Miracle, but neither does this satisfy him; for he declares, *Lett. to Eusebius, p. 29, 30.* That after all the Pains *Eusebius* has taken, about the Definition of a Miracle, he is still as much at a Loss as ever how to judge of a Miracle; and that, in his Opinion, we do not so much want the Definition of a Miracle, as some certain Rule or *Criterion* of Judgment concerning it. Thus I find it is a very hard Thing to content this Writer, whether with a Definition of a Miracle or without it. But tho' I did not give a formal Definition of a Miracle, yet, I think, I have said enough to give a certain *Idea* of what I understand by Miracles in this Controversy.

It appears from the Account I give of Miracles in my former Book, *p. 18, 19.* that I supposed the following Conditions to concur in them, which, when they all concur, yield a sufficient and convincing Attestation to the Divine Mission of Persons, and Authority of Doctrines.

1st, That they must be Works of such a Nature, as manifestly and undeniably transcend all the Power and Skill of any Man, or all the Men upon Earth; and, therefore, evidently argue a supernatural Interposition. For tho' we do not know the utmost Power of all other Beings, yet many Instances may be supposed, in which we may safely pronounce, that such or such Effects are above all the Skill or Power of *Man*; and that, therefore, they must be necessarily owing to the Interposition of a superior Agent or Agents.

2dly, It carries this still higher, if it be supposed, that they are such *amazing and extraordinary Acts of Power and Dominion, as naturally, and almost unavoidably, lead us to regard them as proceeding from the Supreme Lord and Governor of the World, and of Mankind.* For whatever we may suppose the Power of any inferior created Beings to be, yet since they are all under his sovereign Controul, since he, and he alone, is the *Governor* as he was the *Maker* of the World, and since it is of high Importance to Mankind that he should maintain a *visible* Character of Dignity and Superiority in his Works, above the Competition of all other Beings whatsoever, it may reasonably be supposed, that there are some Works which God reserves in his own Hands, or which he will never suffer to be done, but under his special Direction and Influence; at least, never by any *evil* Beings, engaged in an Opposition to the Interests of his Kingdom. Instances of this Kind are mentioned by Mr. Chapman, see *Euseb.* p. 96, 116. And such, manifestly, are several of the Miracles, recorded to have been wrought by *Moses* and our *Lord Jesus Christ*, which carry such glorious Indications of a Divine Power and Dominion, that it is scarce possible to help regarding them, as done by the Lord of Nature, and under his own Direction and special Influence.

3dly, It adds great Force to this, if there be a Succession or Concurrence of many such amazing and extraordinary Acts of Power and Dominion, and that for a Series of Years together, all manifestly tending to the same End. For if such Things were done merely in a single Instance or two, let the Fact be ever so extraordinary, and above all the Power of Man, yet it might be suspected that it was only some strange Thing that had happened, from which nothing could be certainly concluded.

And

And such also were the Miracles of *Moses* and *Jesus Christ*. The Evidence was not put upon a single Miracle or two, however extraordinary and glorious, but there was a wonderful Series and Succession of unparallel'd Acts and supernatural Attestations.

4thly, Another Condition I mentioned is this, that they should be all plainly wrought in Attestation and Evidence of the Divine *Mission* of the Person by whom, or in Favour of whom, they are wrought, and in *Confirmation of the Scheme of Doctrines and Laws*, by him published to the World, in the Name of God. And, accordingly, we find that *Moses* put the Proof of his being extraordinarily sent of God, and of the Divine Original and Authority of the Laws he delivered in his Name, upon those illustrious Miracles, which he was enabled to perform in the Name and by the Power of God. And in like Manner the Miracles wrought by *Jesus Christ*, and his *Apostles* and Disciples after him, had evidently this as the main View to which they were all directed, viz. to confirm the Divine *Mission* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Truth and Divine Authority of the Doctrines and Laws which he introduced.

5thly, It is farther required, that they should never be controlled or overruled by any superior Miracles, or contrary Evidence.

Perhaps something short of all this might in many Cases be sufficient; but where all these Things concur, they may be justly regarded, as yielding a Divine Testimony to those Doctrines and Laws, in Attestation of which they are wrought. And it cannot reasonably be reconciled to the Notion of an infinitely wise and good Mind, presiding over the Affairs of Men, to suppose that they ever should be suffered to be wrought in Attestation of an Impos-
ture,

fture. I have already shewn, that a Revelation, confirmed by the Authority and Testimony of God himself, would be of vast Use to Mankind in Matters of Religion in their present State, both to assure them of Doctrines, which however useful, they could not have known, or not so certainly, without it; and to give a greater Force to Laws; and urge their Duty more strongly upon them in its just Extent. Now it is scarce to be conceived what greater Proof could be given to Mankind of the Divine Authority of such a Revelation, than such a Series of extraordinary miraculous Works wrought in Attestation of it. One Way of God's discovering himself to Mankind is by his *Works*. And as his ordinary standing Works exhibit the glorious Displays of his eternal *Power* and *Godhead*, which should lead Men to acknowledge and adore him, and will leave them without Excuse if they do not do it; so supposing that God designed to make extraordinary Discoveries of his Will, in a Way of special Revelation, a Series of extraordinary *miraculous* Works, that argue a Dominion over Nature and its established Laws, wrought in Attestation of that Revelation, seem to be peculiarly fitted for engaging Mankind to receive and submit to that Revelation, as of Divine Authority. This is a Way of God's giving his Testimony, and shewing his Interposition, the most powerful and striking that can be, and which comes with a Force which human Nature is scarce able to resist. And those, that on the Evidence of such a Series of wonderful Works as I have been supposing, receive Doctrines and Laws as coming from God, act a wise and reasonable Part, and shew a becoming Veneration and Regard to the Supreme Being, and a due Submission to the Discoveries of his Will.

Let us now see what our Author offers to shew, that no Miracles can be Proofs of the Divine Mission of Persons, or the Divine Original and Authority of Doctrines.

He lays down some general Observations concerning Miracles, p. 30, &c. to be afterwards applied; tho' when he should come distinctly to apply them to the Miracles of *Moses*, and of *Jesus Christ*, he leaves the Reader to himself to apply them as well as he can. But I shall consider his *Lemmata*, as he calls them, and make some Application of them as I go along.

His first Observation is this, *That we have no certain Test or Rule of Judgment, whereby to distinguish between a true Miracle and a false one, or between a Thing of this Nature that is really done, or done only in Appearance.* And to strengthen this, he observes, *That the Senses themselves are liable to Deception: and, in Cases of this Kind, we have the more Reason to suspect them, because there have been innumerable Stories of supernatural Facts which have been generally received and believed, as strongly attested by great Numbers of credible Eye and Ear-witnesses, and yet afterwards appeared ill-grounded, and to have been owing to Imposture, Ignorance, or Credulity, &c. And Men are the more easily imposed on in such Matters, as they love to gratify the Passion of Admiration.*

This is a very general Way of Talking, and if it were good for any Thing, might be brought to prove, that because Persons have been sometimes deceived and imposed upon in Facts, therefore no Man can ever depend upon the *Testimony* of his *Senses* in any Case whatsoever; tho' our Author himself elsewhere speaks of our Senses as so certain, *that they leave no more to doubt of any Deception*, p. 18. And, for my part, I cannot help thinking, that if Miracles be of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, that

that Men may have as much Certainty that they were really done, and not in Appearance only, as they can have that any other *Facts* whatsoever are really done, here is a Certainty sufficient to satisfy any reasonable Mind, and it were perfectly absurd and unreasonable to demand more. And such were the Miracles that were wrought by *Moses*, and our *Lord Jesus Christ*. They were a Series of extraordinary Facts done in open View, before such Numbers of Persons, and the Reality of which so plainly appeared in the Effects, that to say that those that heard and saw them could not be certain that they were really done, is to destroy all Certainty whatsoever. And I will undertake to prove, That taking them as they are recorded to have happened, the Persons that were Witnesses to them had as full Proof of their Reality as any Man can possibly have of any Thing for which he has the Testimony of all his Senses.

His second Observation is this, *That we have no Test or Rule of human Judgment, whereby to know what is, or is not a Miracle, supposing a Thing to be really done, and that there is no Deception in the Case with regard to the Fact it self.* The Reason he gives is this, *Because we know not the utmost Power of natural Agents, or how far even the most common Causes may sometimes concur unobserved by us, which may make a Thing look extraordinary, when there is nothing uncommon in it. And from hence how extraordinary and supernatural soever a Thing may appear, yet we can scarce ever pronounce with any Certainty, concerning a peculiar Divine Agency, or immediate and occasional Divine Interposition.* p. 31. Now, in Opposition to this Lemma, I lay down another, and that is, That as Miracles may be so circumstanced that we can have all the Assurance that they were really done, and not in Appearance only, that we can have that any Facts
what.

whatsoever were really done ; so they may be of such a Nature, that we may certainly know that they were really *Miracles* ; that is, that they were above all the Power of any Man, or all the Men upon Earth, and of all natural material Causes. And though we are not thoroughly acquainted with all the Secrets of Nature, and the Powers of natural Causes, yet this does not hinder, but that in many Cases we may safely and certainly pronounce that such and such Effects, *e. g.* the Raising the Dead, or Restoring a perished Limb in an instant, exceed all natural mechanical Powers *. And as there may be miraculous Works performed, concerning which we may be sufficiently certain, that they exceed the Power of Man and all natural material Causes, so they may be of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, that we may be certain, that they were not wrought by superior invisible evil Beings, and therefore must be wrought by the immediate Power of God himself ; or which comes to the same Thing in the present Question, by the Agency of invisible good Beings, acting under his special Influence and Direction. There may be Works that carry such illustrious Characters of a Sovereignty and Dominion over Nature, that they cannot reasonably be ascribed to any other than to the Supreme Lord and Governor of the World, or to his special Direction : Nor can it, without the greatest Absurdity, be supposed, in consistency with his infinite Wisdom and Goodness, and the Glory of his unequalled Majesty and Dominion, that he should ever suffer them to be wrought in Attestation of an Imposture, or to promote the Interests of Vice, and Falshood and Superstition. And I am willing to join Issue with this Writer

* The Absurdity of the contrary Supposition Mr. *Chapman* has well exposed, *Euseb.* p. 82, 83.

when

when he pleases, and shew, that the Miracles wrought in Attestation of the Mosaical and Christian Dispensation were such.

His third *Lemma* or Observation, with respect to Miracles, is this, That *where the Facts are not the immediate Objects of Sense, but depend upon Testimony, this Testimony being human must be always fallible. And in this Case the Probability will be still less at a greater Distance from the Fountain, or first original Evidence, or as it comes to us through more Hands, and in a longer Succession of Time. For in this Case there must be always some danger of Alterations in the Conveyance, and a few Circumstances either left out or added, might make the most common Thing in the World look extraordinary and miraculous.* In Opposition to this I lay down this Position, That as Miracles may be of such a Nature, that those that are Eye and Ear-witnesses may be as certain of the Reality of them, as any Man can be, by the Testimony of his Senses, of any Facts whatsoever, so those Miracles may be transmitted to others that were not Eye and Ear-witnesses, with such a Degree of Credibility, that there can be no reasonable Ground for Doubt of the Truth of those Facts. And though in this Case our Belief of them depends upon human Testimony, yet human Testimony may be so circumstantiated as to give a certain Assurance, which no reasonable Man can doubt of, concerning that which is conveyed to us by that Testimony. And particularly, with respect to Accounts of Facts done in past Ages, all the World owns, that they may be transmitted to us with such a Degree of Evidence, that we can no more reasonably doubt of them than if we our selves had lived in those Ages; and any Man that should refuse to believe them, and give no other Reason for it, but that they come to us by *human Testimony*, and

and were done several Ages ago, would only render himself ridiculous.

His fourth Observation is this, That as *human Testimony must be always fallible, so with regard to Miracles, Prodigies, Ghosts, Apparitions, and Things in themselves improbable, it has the very least and lowest Degree of Credibility. The same Testimony and Attestation which would be easily taken for a common natural Fact, would not be soon admitted for an extraordinary and miraculous One, where there must be always more Danger and Probability of Deception. And therefore the Evidence or Proof in this Case ought to be so much the Stronger and Incontestible, in proportion to the natural Improbability or Incredibility of the Thing, p. 32.* But a Thing's being extraordinary and miraculous is no Objection against the *Credibility* of it, if at the same Time it be of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, that the Persons that were Witnesses to it might have as full an *Affurance* of the Certainty and Reality of it, as any Man can possibly have of any Facts whatsoever. And of this Kind were the miraculous Facts that were done in Attestation of the *Mosaic* and *Christian* Dispensation. They were attended with such a Degree of Evidence as was every Way equal to the Importance of the Facts, and far superior to the Evidence brought for many other Facts, which yet it would be accounted unreasonable to doubt of. And the Accounts of those Facts are transmitted to us with a Degree of Evidence and Credibility, that many other Accounts of past Facts are not transmitted with; which yet, in the Judgment of all reasonable Persons, may be safely depended on.

His fifth Observation is, That it is *highly improbable, and cannot be admitted, that God should work Miracles, or interpose by an immediate Divine Power*

Power out of the Way of natural Agency and common Providence, but to answer some great End of vast Importance to Mankind. And therefore he would not work Miracles, either to prove Things which were plainly and necessarily true in Nature and Reason before, nor Things in their own Nature indifferent, and such as can serve to no good Use or Purpose at all, when they are known and put in Practice, p. 33.

It will be easily granted, That if God interposes, by an immediate Divine Power, out of the Way of natural Agency, it will be for some worthy End of Importance to Mankind. And it is a valuable End, and of Importance to Mankind, to attest a Revelation by Miracles; one Design of which is to confirm and illustrate those great Truths and Obligations, even of natural Religion, which, though founded in Nature and Reason, yet, by the Author's own Acknowledgment, were, through the Corruption of Mankind, in a great Measure defaced and obscured; and also to make a Discovery of some Things, which, though of considerable Importance to Mankind, were such as they could not have discovered without such a Revelation. Nor is it any Objection against the Usefulness and Importance of such a Revelation, that it also prescribes some Things of a positive Nature, which, though abstractly, and in themselves considered, they are indifferent, yet are designed, in a Subserviency to the main Ends of all Religion, and when observed, according to the Institution, are really useful.

Our Author, in enlarging on this last Observation, takes Occasion to shew, That Christ's Miracles were useful to remove the Prejudices of the People, and to procure a due Attention and Regard to his Doctrines; though he will not allow them

them to have yielded any additional *Proof* or *Attestation* to those Doctrines. I shall take Notice of this afterwards. At present I shall only observe, That if it were an End worthy of God to interpose by such glorious Miracles, as this Writer pretends to grant, to engage the *Attention* of the People to our Saviour's Doctrines, then certainly it must be owned to be an End worthy of God, to exhibit those Miracles in order to give an *Attestation* to the Truth of those Doctrines. And, indeed, the One of these, as the Case was circumstanced, was really inseparable from the other. For if God concerned himself in so extraordinary a Manner, by interposing out of the Way of natural Agency, to procure their Attention to those Doctrines, this was a *Proof* of his *Approbation* of those Doctrines; and consequently was a *Proof* of their being Good, and True, and Divine. And therefore these Miracles must, in Reason, not only engage the People to *consider* what Christ delivered, but be regarded by them as *Proofs* and Evidences of his Divine Mission, and of the Truth and Divine Authority of the Doctrines he taught. And accordingly it is evident, that it was in this View that our Saviour himself represented the End and Design of his Miracles; as I shall have Occasion to shew.

Our Author has little more as to the general Question concerning Miracles: He thinks *nothing can be plainer than this, that the bare Power of working Miracles can be no Proof at all, either of the Truth of Doctrine, or any Authority, or special Commission, that the Persons have from God*, p. 26. And again, p. 49. *Nothing can be plainer than this, that the bare Exertion of Power, of what Nature or Kind soever, can have no Connexion with Truth or Goodness; but the Ends and Purposes to which that Power is directed must be considered, and*

must denominate the Persons as good or bad, &c. This Objection is so fully exposed by his learned Adversary Mr. Chapman, that he ought not to have repeated it, at least without endeavouring to answer what had been offered against it. See *Euseb.* p. 78, 79.

It will be easily allowed, that Power and Truth are *distinct* Ideas, though inseparably united in God the great Fountain of both ; but it doth not follow from thence, that Power can in no case be exerted, as to yield an *Attestation* to Truth. For supposing Power exerted in such a Manner as to bear the evident Marks and Characters of a Divine Interposition and Agency, and that this Power is exerted in Confirmation of a Body of Doctrines and Laws pretended to have been received from God, then this Power so exerted may be regarded as the *Testimony* of God himself, in favour of those Doctrines and Laws, and as a Proof that they did indeed, come from God. And if it shews, that these Doctrines came from God, it shews that they are true ; because it is impossible, that God should be deceived himself, or be accessary to deceive others, by giving his Attestation to a Lye.

There is a Passage which this Author has p. 80, 81. which I shall here consider, because it relates to this Subject, and the evident Design of it is to shew, that neither Inspiration nor Miracles, as a Proof of that Inspiration, are to be regarded as yielding any Attestation to the Truth and Divinity of Doctrines received by Inspiration, and confirmed by Miracles. He urges, that we are obliged to try the Spirits, to bring the Doctrines themselves to the Test of Reason and sound Judgment, and to consider their Nature and Tendency, thereby to know whether they came from the Spirit of Truth and Righteousness, or of Error and Delusion. And

that, suppose Doctrines to be delivered in the most extraordinary Way possible, this extraordinary Manner of Conveyance could be no Proof of those Doctrines, which might be Error and Delusion notwithstanding; and those Doctrines must be judged by the same Test and Rule, as if they had come to us in the most common and natural Way. And he observes, That if an Angel from Heaven should have delivered any other Doctrines, different from those of natural Light and Purity, they must have been received, with what extraordinary miraculous Power never they had been proposed and delivered.

As far as I can understand the Force of his Argument, it runs thus; That because all Doctrines are to be brought to the Test and Judgment of Reason, so far that no Doctrines must be admitted that are evidently contradictory to the clear Principles of sound Reason, and subversive of Morality, and the eternal Rules of Righteousness, therefore neither *Inspiration* nor *Miracles* can be depended upon as any *Proofs* of Doctrines at all; nor is any more Regard to be had to what comes in this Way, and is thus attested, than if it had come in the ordinary Way. This is a very strange Way of Reasoning; nor is it easy to discern the Connexion of the Conclusion with the Premises. But let us suppose Doctrines which are not contradictory to the clear Principles of Reason, or subversive of Morality, but yet, which we could not have found out of our selves by our own Reason, and which cannot be proved to be necessarily true by any Arguments drawn from the Nature of the Thing, and that these Doctrines are confirmed by numerous uncontroled Miracles; the Question is, Whether such Miracles may not be justly regarded as yielding a Divine Testimony to those Doctrines? and, Whether they may not be reason-

ably received as of Divine Authority, on the Account of those extraordinary miraculous *Attestations*, though we should not have thought our selves obliged to receive them without those *Attestations*? And to this the Author's Argument here saith nothing at all.

It will be granted, That no Doctrines are to be admitted upon any Pretence whatsoever that are contrary to the evident Light of Reason, and which subvert the Obligations of Morality; and in this Sense it may be admitted, as our Author observes, that *if the Doctrines of Christ himself could not have born this Test of Light and Purity, they could not have been rationally received.* But then, at the same Time, it may also be certainly concluded from the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of Divine Providence, that if this had been the Case, Christ would never have been enabled to work such illustrious Miracles in Confirmation of his Divine Mission, much less would God have raised him from the Dead. It can, in no Consistency with the Divine Perfections, be supposed, that God would have given, or suffered to be given, such a Series of illustrious Attestations, bearing all the Marks of Divinity, in Confirmation of an Imposture, and to favour the Cause of Idolatry, False Doctrine, Vice and Licentiousness. The Apostle *Paul*, in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, Chap. i. 8. puts the Case, that if He himself, or an *Angel from Heaven*, should preach a different Gospel from that which he had preached to them, they were not to regard it. This is only a vehement Form of Assertion, to shew, that on no Pretence whatsoever should they swerve from the Gospel they had received from him. But why were they so firmly to adhere to the Gospel he had taught them? It was because it was the Gospel he had received by *Revelation*.

lation from *Jefus Christ*; see *ver. 12.* and which was confirmed by the most illustrious *miraculous* Attestations, and Gifts of the Holy Spirit; see *Chap. iii. 2, 5.* So that he is so far from intending by this to insinuate, that Inspiration and Miracles can be no Proof of Doctrines, that on the contrary he produces these as manifest and incontestable Proofs of the Truth and Divinity of that Gospel, from which they were never under any Pretence to depart.



C H A P. III.

The Miracles wrought by Moses vindicated against the Author's Objections. The Case of the Egyptian Sorcerers, and their Miracles, considered. His Attempt to prove that Moses might have been assisted by some supernatural evil Power, because his Miracles were wrought not for the Good, but for the Destruction of Mankind, and were done out of a particular Partiality to the Israelites. The Nature of those Miracles, and the End for which they were wrought, prove they could not be the Work of an evil Being. The Miracles of Jesus Christ vindicated. Not merely wrought to procure Attention from the People, but designed as proper Proofs and Attestations to his Divine Mission, and the Truth and Divine Authority of his Laws and Doctrine. The wonderful Effects of Christ's Miracles not owing to the Strength of Imagination. The extraordinary miraculous Facts wrought in Attestation of the Mosaical and Christian Dispensation come to us with sufficient Evidence to make it reasonable for us to believe the Truth of these Facts.

HAVING considered what this Writer offers on the general Question about Miracles, I shall now proceed to examine what he hath concerning the Miracles of *Moses* and our *Lord Jesus Christ*. I had endeavoured to shew, that supposing those Miracles to have been really done,

done, as they are represented in Scripture, they were of such a Nature, that it cannot reasonably be supposed that they could be done, or that God would have suffered them to be done in Attestation of an *Imposture*. See *Divine Authority*, p. 19--23. This the Author represents as a *building the whole Proof upon a Petitio Principii*, and as a *taking the miraculous Facts, with Regard to Moses as well as Christ, for granted*, p. 48. He cannot, it seems, or will not, distinguish here between two Questions which are of very distinct Consideration. The one is, whether supposing the Miracles wrought by *Moses* and our *Lord Jesus Christ* to have been really done as represented in Scripture, they might justly be regarded as sufficient *Credentials* of their Divine Mission, and as sufficient Attestations to the Truth and Divine Original of the Doctrines and Laws they published in the Name of God. The other is, what Reason we have to believe that those Miracles were *really* wrought as they are represented, and the Accounts given of them may be safely depended upon. It is the former of these that comes properly to be considered in this Place. And it highly concerns this Author to consider it, because if this can be proved, the main Question is determined against him, *viz.* That there may be Miracles of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, as to yield a proper Proof and Attestation to the Divine Mission of Persons, and Authority of Doctrines. He is not insensible of this; and, therefore, after having made a Flourish about the *Petitio Principii*, as he calls it, he is willing, it seems, to *give me all possible Advantage in the Argument, and to suppose the Truth of the Facts themselves*, and yet denies the *Use I made of it, and the Consequences drawn from it*: That is, he denies, that supposing the Facts were true, they could furnish a sufficient *Proof* of the Divine Mission of those by whom these Miracles were

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were performed, and sufficient Attestations to the Truth and Divine Original of those Doctrines and Laws in Confirmation of which they were wrought. One would have expected here, that he would have undertaken to prove this from the *Nature* or *Circumstances* of those Miracles; but nothing of this appears in this Place, where it might naturally be expected; nothing but a repeating what he had said on the general Question, that the intrinsic Excellency of the Doctrines themselves is the only possible Proof, and that no Miracles can be a Proof. But as there are several Hints loosely scattered after the Author's Manner in several Parts of his Book, particularly in his first Section, to shew that neither the Miracles of *Moses*, nor those of *Christ*, taken as represented in Scripture, were proper *Proofs* or Attestations to their Divine Mission, or to the Divine Authority of the Doctrines and Laws they published in the Name of God, I shall draw them together, and distinctly consider them.

And, *First*, I shall begin with what he saith concerning the Miracles of *Moses*.

One Objection, which he repeats again and again, is drawn from the Miracles wrought by the *Egyptian* Sorcerers. He observes, that “nothing can be plainer than this, that the bare Power of working Miracles is no Proof at all, either of the Truth of Doctrines, or any Authority, or special Commission, that the Persons have from God. The *Egyptian* Sorcerers, if the Accounts be true, wrought great Miracles; and they who could create a living Creature, and turn a Rod into a Serpent, might as well have made a World, raised the Dead, or done any Thing else within the Compass of Power. It can signify nothing to say, that these Sorcerers only wrought false or counterfeit Miracles, but the Miracles wrought by *Moses* were true and real; since

“ since nothing appears from the Story it self, but
 “ that the Miracles were of the same Kind, and
 “ equally true on both Sides. And tho’ *Moses*
 “ wrought greater Miracles than they, this can
 “ only prove his greater Power or Skill; and that
 “ the Magicians were fairly outdone in their own
 “ Way. But it can no more prove any Commis-
 “ sion or Divine Authority of *Moses*, than if he
 “ had conquered them by Force of Arms, &c.
 “ p. 26, 27.”

In examining this Passage, I shall first consider
 of what Kind the Miracles were, that were wrought
 by the *Egyptian* Sorcerers, and then I shall enquire
 into the Justice of the Inference drawn from it;
 whether it follows, that because they wrought such
 Miracles, therefore the Miracles wrought by *Moses*
 could not prove any Commission or Divine Authority
 of *Moses*.

With regard to the *Egyptian* Sorcerers, he ob-
 serves, that if *the Accounts be true, they wrought*
great Miracles. And they who could create a
living Creature, and turn a Rod into a Serpent,
might as well have made a World, raised the Dead,
or done any Thing else within the Compass of Power.
 And, I must own, that tho’ I will not carry it so
 far as to say with this Author, that the turning a
 Rod into a living Creature would have been as
 great an Exertion of Power as creating a World,
 yet it would have argued so great a Power, that,
 I think, no created Being, much less an evil one,
 can be reasonably supposed to have really done it.
 I am therefore persuaded that it was done only in
 Appearance. It may reasonably be conceived, that
 supposing evil Spirits to have been concerned, they
 might easily have *snatched* away the Magician’s
 Rods, and have *substituted* Serpents in the Room
 of them, of which there were enough to be had
 in or about *Egypt*. And that they might do this
 by

by so quick and slight a Conveyance, as not to be observed by the Spectators, as Jugglers often perform their Tricks. But to this the Author objects, that it signifies nothing to say, that these Sorcerers wrought false or counterfeit Miracles, but the Miracles wrought by Moses were true and real; since nothing appears from the Story it self, but that the Miracles were of the same Kind, and equally true on both Sides. To which I answer, that supposing the Miracles of the Magicians were wrought in Appearance only in the Manner now described, not by a real Conversion of a Rod into a Serpent, but by a quick and dextrous Substitution of a Serpent instead of a Rod; and that in Moses's Case there was a real Conversion of a Serpent into a Rod; yet it was proper, in relating the Story, to relate the Fact as it appear'd to the Spectators. If it had been said in the Story it self, that *Moses* really turned his Rod into a Serpent, but the Magicians did not really turn their Rods into Serpents, but only appeared to do so; this might, and, no doubt, would have been objected against as a manifest Proof of great Partiality in the Historian. The Spectators thought their Rods, as well as that of *Moses*, were turned into Serpents, and it was proper to relate the Matter as it appeared to them. But it may farther be urged, why may it not then be supposed, that *Moses* also wrought his Miracles in Appearance only, by some Slight of Art and Cunning, or by the Agency and Confederacy of evil Spirits, and therefore was only a greater Magician than they were? I answer, this might possibly have been suspected, if *Moses* had wrought only such Miracles as the *Magicians* seemed to work as well as he. It might, in that Case, have been imagined, that there was some Trick in it, tho' the Spectators could not find it out; or, that it was only some strange unaccountable Thing that had

had happened, from which no Inference could be drawn in Proof of his Divine Mission. But the amazing *Succession* of Wonders that followed put it beyond all reasonable Doubt, that his Miracles were real, and incomparably grand, exceeding the Power of any Creature. And many of them were of such a Nature, that by the Reality and Greatness of their Effects, left no Room for supposing or suspecting an Imposture. If it be said, If the Magicians *imitated* some of *Moses's* Miracles so well, why might they not imitate others of his Miracles too in the same Way; *e. g.* why might they not pretend as he did, to turn the *Dust* into *Lice*, and to have managed this as they did in the other Case, by a Conveyance of Lice into the Place of the Dust; which would have been no very difficult Matter, supposing the Assistance of invisible Agents? I answer, that I doubt not, they might have imitated that as well as they had done some of the former Miracles, if they had been permitted to do so; but *Providence* would not suffer them, or the evil Spirits that assisted them, to go so far as to imitate the other Miracles of *Moses* even in Appearance; but ordered it so, that there was an entire *Triumph* over them; and they themselves were forced to acknowledge that *Moses's* Miracles were real, and owing to the Power of God. And their being thus stopped and hindered from going any farther, even in a Matter that seemed not to be more difficult than the other Wonders they appeared to perform, might give the People just Ground to conclude, that all their Feats before were owing to Delusion and Imposture, and that they had not really effected what they had seemed to do*.

And

* It must be observed, that even with Respect to some of the Miracles in which the Magicians seemed to imitate *Moses*, he still preserved a manifest *Superiority*, and the Miracles, as per-

And now it is manifest, that the Author's Inference will not bear, that because the Magicians wrought such Miracles, therefore the Miracles wrought by *Moses* could give no Attestation to the Divine Authority of his Mission. For the Miracles of the *Egyptian* Sorcerers were very few in Number, and those immediately controlled by a

performed by him, left no reasonable Room for Suspicion of a Juggle or Imposture, tho' theirs justly might. *e. g.* The Magicians pretended to imitate the Miracle of *Moses*, in turning *Water* into *Blood*, and in bringing *Frogs* upon the Land. But there was evidently a vast Difference between them; from whence it appeared, that an Imposture might take Place in the one Case, but not in the other. *Moses*, by only stretching forth his Rod, turned the *River*, and all the *Streams and Pools*, and all the *Waters*, in *Vessels of Wood and of Stone*, throughout all the *Land of Egypt*, into *Blood*, so that the *Fish that was in the River died*, and the *River stank*. The Reality and great Extent of the Effect shewed the Truth and Divinity of the Miracle, and that there was nothing of Juggle and Delusion in it. For where could a Quantity of Blood be found at once sufficient to do all this, except we suppose a real Transmutation of it? But, with respect to the Magicians, the Case was otherwise. A small Quantity of Water must have been brought to them, that probably was got by digging; which was the Way the *Egyptians* took to get Water to drink, *Exod. vii. 24*. If this was brought to them in a *Vessel*, it was no hard Matter, supposing the Assistance of invisible Agents to convey that Water away, and, by a quick Conveyance, put Blood in the stead of it, which was then easily to be had every where. In this Case there was Room for a Juggle and Imposture, but not in the former. In like Manner, with Regard to the Miracle of the *Frogs*, *Moses* at once brought an immense Quantity of *Frogs* out of the *River*, *Streams*, and *Pools of Water*, which filled the whole Land at once, and even all the Houses and Chambers of the *Egyptians*; and such an instantaneous Production of so vast a Quantity shewed that it was not mere Juggle, but that there was a creating Power exerted in the Production of them, and that the God of Nature was concerned in it. But, when this was done, the Magicians might imitate this Miracle by causing some *Frogs* to come upon the Land, which they might easily bring, by a quick and artificial Conveyance, when *Frogs* abounded every where, in the Place where they pretended to work the Miracle.

superior Power. In this Case, there is no Absurdity in supposing, that God may suffer evil Beings to exert their utmost Power and Art to deceive and impose upon the Spectators, in Behalf of Error, and Idolatry, and Vice; because there is a Remedy at Hand. The superior Miracles, by which they are controlled and overpowered, open a Way for detecting the Delusion, and are a sufficient Antidote against the bad Influence those Miracles might otherwise have upon the Minds of Men. But that he should suffer such an astonishing Series of glorious Works, so incomparably grand, and bearing all the Marks of a Divine Power, and of a Dominion over Nature, such as were those which were wrought by *Moses*, that God should suffer those to be wrought by evil Beings (even supposing it in the Power of such Beings to perform them, which is highly improbable) and that in Attestation of Falshood and Imposture, for a Course of Years together, without ever controlling them by any contrary or superior Miracles; this is a quite different Case, and cannot possibly be reconciled to the Wisdom and Goodness of a superintending Providence. And to suppose (as this Writer does) that the vast Superiority and amazing Grandeur of *Moses's* Miracles above those of the Magicians, was no more a Proof of his being sent of God than if he had overcome them by *Force of Arms*, is a Banter on the common Sense of Mankind; except he could prove that there is nothing more extraordinary in the one Case than in the other.

But the Author further objects against the Miracles of *Moses*, that he might have been assisted by some supernatural evil Power, since his Miracles were commonly wrought not for the Good, but the Destruction of Mankind, p. 27. And elsewhere he asks, for what good End were *Moses's* Miracles done, supposing them to have been really wrought?

And

And he pronounces, that it *was only to destroy one Nation, the Egyptians, and to enable the Israelites to destroy another Nation, the Canaanites, by putting them all to the Sword, without Mercy or Humanity, &c.* see p. 70. I answer, that the great End of *Moses's* Miracles was plainly this, to give *Attestation* to a most excellent Law and Constitution, established for the most wise and valuable Purposes, as I shewed largely in my former Book. See *Divine Authority*, Chap. 2. And if in the Course of these miraculous Dispensations, and in Pursuance of the main Ends of them, there were awful and exemplary *Judgments* inflicted upon guilty Nations, there was nothing in this that can be proved to be unsuitable to the Character of a just and holy God. For since Justice and Purity is included in the Idea of the Deity as well as Goodness and Mercy, extraordinary Acts of Power in Execution of his righteous Vengeance upon wicked Persons and Nations, may be as much the Works of God, and bear as evident Marks of Divinity, as extraordinary Acts of Goodness and Mercy. And, in *Moses's* Miracles, there were evident Demonstrations of both these. As to the Plagues inflicted upon the *Egyptians*, which the Author has particularly in View, there was nothing in them unworthy of God as the wise and righteous Governor of the World. The *Egyptians* had treated the *Israelites* with the utmost Barbarity and Insolence, and had been guilty of a Series of Oppressions scarce to be parallel'd in History; and if, in this Case, the *Israelites* had done themselves Justice, and forced their Way out of the inhospitable Country, even to the Destruction of those their Enemies and Oppressors, and had taken their Substance with them, as a just Compensation for the inhuman Exactions and Oppressions they had laid upon them; I presume, this Author himself would scarce pretend there was any Thing in this contrary to Justice,

Justice, and the Law of Nature and Nations. And it is great Odds, but that if it had been done by a People that happened to be in his Favour, he would have commended it as manifesting a noble Spirit of *Freedom* in Opposition to Oppression and *Tyranny*. And if the *Israelites* could not have been justly blamed for endeavouring, if it had been in their Power, to free themselves from the *Egyptian* Yoke, even by Methods that might have ended in the Ruin of their cruel and arbitrary Oppressors; I can see no Reason to prove, that it was unbecoming God to exert his own Divine Power in Vindication of an injured People, and to exhibit a signal Monument, to all Ages, of his just Detestation of tyrannical Insolence and Oppression. Especially when it is considered, that the Plagues were not inflicted all at once, but by Degrees, one after another: That *Pharaoh* and his *Egyptians* were told upon what Terms they might be freed from them; even upon the Terms of letting the oppressed People go: That these Judgments were successively removed soon after their being inflicted, upon their expressing their Repentance, and promising Amendments: That the severest Judgments of all, which touched their Lives, such as the Destruction of the *First-born*, and the overwhelming *Pharaoh* and his *Host* in the red Sea, were not inflicted till they had had such repeated Demonstrations of the Divine Power and Vengeance as rendered them utterly inexcusable; and that they had fair Warning given them before the former of these was executed, and might have prevented it by a proper Conduct: And as to the latter, it was what they plainly brought upon themselves by their own Presumption and Obstinaey.

It must be farther considered, that, by the Author's own Acknowledgment, *Egypt* was the Seat and Fountain of *Idolatry* and *Superstition*, from whence

whence it was derived and propagated to other Nations. And in this View the Propriety of the Miracles wrought by *Moses* among the *Egyptians* is very evident. One manifest Design of them was to confound Idolatry in its proper Seat and Source, and to execute Judgment against all the Gods of Egypt, as it is expressed, *Exod. xii. 12. Numb. xxxiii. 4.* Those amazing Acts of Divine Power and Vengeance might naturally have led the *Egyptians*, and especially their *Priests* and *Rulers*, to reflect on their own ill Conduct, not only in the Oppressions they had exercised upon the *Israelites*, but in the *Idolatries* they had too much countenanced and propagated; and tended to convince them that their *Gods*, of whom they entertained a high Opinion, and whom they endeavoured to recommend to other Nations as proper Objects of Adoration, were vain and idle Things, unable to defend or deliver themselves, or their Worshippers. And this should have led them to the Acknowledgment and sole Adoration of the only true God, the Lord of Nature. This was both the natural Tendency of those Miracles, and is expressly said to have been one great Design of them*. If they had produced this Effect, they would have had a salutary Influence, not only upon them, but other Nations, and been of signal Service to Mankind; and if they did not actually produce this Effect, it could be charged upon nothing but their own Obstinacy.

With Respect to the Case of the *Canaanites*, our Author frequently insists upon it as a Demonstration that the Law of *Moses* could not possibly be from God. He looks upon the Destruction of the *Canaanites*, which *Moses* commanded in the Name of God, to be the most bloody Outrage and Profanation of the Name of God that ever was known.

* See *Exod. vii. 3. viii. 10. ix. 16. 29.*

That it was contrary to all *common Humanity*, and *the Laws of Nature and Nations*, since the *Canaanites* had never done those *holy Butchers, or divine Conquerors, the least Injury*. He aggravates this in the strongest Expressions, and returns to it upon all Occasions; as particularly *p. 27, 29, 39.* and again, *p. 70, 75.* and in several other Places.

I have elsewhere fully considered this Objection, which had been urged in all its Force by the Author of *Christianity as old as the Creation* *. At present I shall only observe, that if our Author be disposed calmly to reason the Case, and not think to carry his Point by Dint of Clamour and Confidence, and giving hard Words, he must, in order to make good his Argument, fairly prove that it is inconsistent with the *Idea* of God, considered as the wise and righteous Governor of the World, to *punish* a guilty Nation, even to utter Destruction, for their execrable Wickedness; or, that if it be just in him to do so, he cannot *commission* another Nation to be the Executioners of his just Sentence against them: Or that, in that Case, they cannot justly *execute* such Commission; and that this alone will be sufficient to prove that a Dispensation was not given from God, which was confirmed by such illustrious Miracles bearing all the Characters of a Divine Interposition, and the Laws of which were holy, just, and pure, and of an excellent Tendency.

That it is not unworthy of God, as the righteous Governor of the World, to punish a guilty Nation, or Nations, even to Extirpation, for their Wickedness, can scarce be denied by any that acknowledge a *Providence*. If he should send a destructive *Plague* or *Famine* with this View, to punish a wicked People, it would be the highest Presumption to arraign the Justice or Wisdom of his

* See *Answer to Christianity, &c. Vol. II. p. 429--437.*

Providence, though in this Case *Infants* as well as the *Adult*, Persons of every Sex and Age, and some comparatively Innocent, would be involved in the common Destruction; but God knows how to make a Difference between them in another World. There is scarce any Fact that is vouched by a more universal Tradition than the general *Deluge* *, which destroyed almost the whole human Race at once, as a Punishment for the Wickedness of Mankind. There have been *Plagues* that have raged over a great Part of the Earth, and have been thought to have destroyed near a third Part of Mankind. And I believe none that own a Providence but will acknowledge a special Hand of God in all this; at least this Author must do so, who affirms, that Evil as well as Good, Punishments as well as Mercies, come from God, p. 82. Now to apply this to the Case of the *Canaanites*; the Destruction that God had determined to inflict upon them is expressly declared to be for their abominable Wickedness, and Corruption of Manners. They are charged not only with the most gross *Idolatry*, but with the most unnatural and monstrous Crimes of bestial *Impurity*. See *Lev. xviii. 3—25. xx. 2—23.* Their Vices had a long Time before this brought down a most exemplary Judgment upon considerable Numbers among them, viz. the Inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and the neighbouring Cities. And they had afterwards a considerable Space given them for Repentance, near four Hundred Years. See *Gen. xv. 13—16.* But notwithstanding the Warnings that had been given them they grew worse and worse, and became so universally depraved in their Manners, that the *Land was ready to spew out the Inhabitants*, as it is emphatically expressed, *Lev. xviii. 25.* If in this Case God had sent a *Pestilence* entirely to de-

* See concerning this *Grot. de Verit. Relig. Christi. l. 1. § 16.*
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stroy the whole Nation, or had rained a fiery *Deluge* upon the whole Land, as he had done upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, his Justice could not have been accused; and it is very likely this Author himself would scarce have presumed to find fault with it, though in this Case Infants as well as the Adult, Men, Women, and Children, must have perished in the common Calamity.

And if God might justly destroy a Nation for their Wickedness, I think it must be allowed, that it belongs to him to determine in what Way he will think fit to execute that Vengeance. And if he should think fit to give express Commission to another Nation to execute that Vengeance which he had decreed, I see not upon what Principle this can be denied; or how it will be proved to have any Thing in it unworthy of the Supreme Being. If it be, because it is unnatural and unfit for Creatures of the same *Species* to destroy one another, this cannot hold; because there may be many Cases alledged, in which Creatures of the same Kind may without Fault deprive one another both of their Lives and Properties. Every body will allow that this may be done in Execution of the Sentence of a just *Magistrate*, and that he may commission those to execute that Sentence who were never personally injured by the Persons on whom the Punishment is inflicted. And in the Case of *Wars* between contending Nations, it has never been accounted unjust for a Prince to give Commission to his Armies to do Things in the Enemies Country, which will by necessary Consequence bring Ruin upon many innocent Persons, and deprive them both of their Substance and of their Lives, though they had done nothing to deserve it, any farther than as they were the Members of such a Community. And therefore I cannot see how it can reasonably be denied, that the Supreme Lord of the Universe may,

if he thinks fit, without any Impeachment of his governing Wisdom and Justice, give exprefs *Commission*, enjoining any Man, or Number of Men, to execute his righteous, though severe Sentence, against a guilty People, even though it were to their utter Extirpation, in which Case some innocent Persons would probably be involved.

And if God should give such a Commission, expressly enjoining, or commanding any Man, or any Number of Men, or a whole Community, to destroy another Nation, in a declared Execution of his righteous Vengeance upon them for their heinous Wickedness, I do not see, but that it would be very *lawful*, yea, it would be a *Duty*, for such a People so commissioned, to execute that Sentence; and not to execute it, when known to be so, would be a *Crime*; as it would be a Crime for the Persons appointed and commissioned to execute the Sentence of a just *Magistrate* to refuse to execute it, out of a partial Regard or Pity to the Persons thus suffering.

It will be easily granted, that such a Commission to one Nation, to extirpate another, ought to be exceedingly *well proved*; it must be plain and exprefs, and given in a Manner that leaves no room to doubt, that it is indeed a plain and exprefs Commission from God himself. And this I take to have been the present Case. The Commission that was given to destroy the *Canaanites* for their abominable Wickedness was exprefs and solemn; it was the Command of God himself, confirmed to be so by the most extraordinary Attestations. The Miracles done by *Moses*, and afterwards at the Entrance of *Israel* upon the Land of *Canaan*, were of such a Nature, and bore such evident Marks of a Divine Power and Dominion, that it was scarce possible to regard them in any other View, than as proceeding from the Sovereign Lord of the Universe; nor can it
well

well be conceived, that supposing God himself to have interposed, it could have been by more illustrious Demonstrations of his own Divine Power and Majesty, than were here exhibited; or, that supposing such an express Commission to have been really given, it could have been more convincingly proved. And therefore, upon such a View of the Case, it is wrong to charge what the *Israelites* did by express Command of God himself, and in execution of his just Sentence, as a Proof of their transcendent Guilt and Wickedness, and as an Instance of Outrage and Injustice beyond Example; since, though without such an express Commission from God it would have been cruel and unjust in them to do it, yet it was not cruel and unjust to do it in Execution of that Command. As Persons may deprive others of their Lives and Substance in Execution of the Sentence of a just *Magistrate*, and be sufficiently warranted in doing so by his Authority and Command, though to do the same Thing without that Authority, prompted by their own private Passions and Interests, would be Murder and Rapine. If it be urged, that this may serve as a *Precedent* for other Nations, to use their Neighbours with the greatest Cruelty and Injustice, under Pretence of their being very Wicked, and the Enemies of God; I answer, that it cannot justly be a Precedent, except in the *like* Circumstances. Let any Nation produce the same Proofs of an express Commission from God himself, that the *Israelites* did, and then their Commission will be allowed. And if no other Nations have a Right to imitate them, till they can produce as express and illustrious Evidences of an extraordinary Divine Commission as the *Israelites* had, I apprehend there is no great Danger of any ill Consequence from such a Precedent.

Upon the Whole, the real State of the Case was this. The *Canaanites* were arrived to the most monstrous Height of Wickedness, deserving utter Extirpation. God had determined to execute his just Vengeance upon them for their Crimes in the most exemplary Manner. He had, at the same Time; selected a People to himself, whom he determined to erect into a peculiar Polity, and to whom he gave a Body of pure and excellent Laws; the Design of which was to maintain the Worship of the only true God, and the Practice of Righteousness. This People he chose for the Executioners of his just Vengeance, and gave them Commission to destroy that wicked Race. At the same Time he declared the Reason of it to be on the Account of their abominable Idolatry and Impurity, and Wickedness of all Kinds. And this was accompanied with the most solemn Warnings to the *Israelites* not to commit such Crimes, for that they themselves would be obnoxious to as great Punishments if they imitated them in their Idolatry and Corruption of Manners. And it is scarce possible to conceive, that any Thing could have a greater Influence to make them sensible of the Atrociousness of those Crimes, which they saw so exemplarily punished. This is the true State of the Case, as it is represented to us in the Scripture; and notwithstanding all the Author's Noise and Confidence, there is nothing in it, thus considered, that can be proved to be inconsistent with the *Idea* of a just and holy Deity.

But there is another Objection urged by this Writer against the Miracles wrought by *Moses*, and which, he thinks, seems to shew, that if they were really wrought, *he might have been assisted by some supernatural evil Power*; and that is, that they were done out of a particular Partiality in favour of one Nation, who pretended to be the peculiar chosen

chosen People of God, whilst they were the very worst and wickedest Part of the World, p. 27. And then he breaks out into his usual Investives against the *Jews*, of whom he gives the most odious Representation imaginable.

As to the erecting the *Jews* into a peculiar Polity, distinguished from the Rest of Mankind, that there is nothing in this inconsistent with the Divine Perfections; yea, that it was ordered for very wise and excellent Purposes, I have fully shewn in my former Book *, and shall have Occasion to say something to it again in the following Chapter. And supposing God selected any Nation at all for a peculiar People to himself, I do not see why the *Israelites* were not as proper as any others: They came from worthy Ancestors, and though, during their long Continuance and Oppression in *Egypt*, they probably fell very generally from the Knowledge and Practice of the true Religion professed by their Ancestors, yet it is highly probable that there were still many Persons among them that preserved it; and, perhaps, more than were at that Time in other Nations. I think we may justly suppose them to have been better than the *Egyptians* their Oppressors, and who were greatly instrumental in corrupting them; or than the *Canaanites*, who, as appears from the Accounts given of them, were then arrived to the greatest Heighth of Vice, and monstrous Wickedness. What was then the State of other Nations we cannot certainly tell; but it appears from the Accounts given us by the best Historians, of the ancient State of *Greece*, and other Countries at that Time, that Violence, Rapes, and lawless Wickedness, very much prevailed †. So that for any Thing that appears to the contrary, the

* See *Dis. Authority*, &c. Chap. 2.

† See *Thucyd. lib. 1.* and *Plutarch in Theseo.*

Body of the *Israelites*, with all their Faults, were, at least, as good and as righteous as any other Nation at that Time. With regard to their After-conduct, their greatest Fault consisted in their suffering themselves to be enticed to a *Conformity* to the neighbouring Nations in their corrupt Customs and Practices; but tho' this was a very great Fault, yet considering the Proneness of Mankind in all Ages to Vice and Idolatry, perhaps other Nations, in their Circumstances, would not have behaved better than they did. However this be, there is no Reason to talk of God's manifesting a *partial* Conduct towards them, as this Writer insinuates. On the contrary, the whole Course of his Dealings towards the *Israelites* may give us a just Idea of the Wisdom, the Righteousness, the Equity of his Providence, and the Impartiality of his Judgments: Since, tho' he had entred into a special Relation to them as his People, yet he never connived at or approved their Crimes: But as he heaped Benefits upon them when they kept close to his Covenant, so he punished them in an exemplary Manner for their Disobedience; and again accepted them upon their Repentance and Return. Such particularly were his Dealings towards them in the Wilderness, every Way agreeable to his own Perfections. He, on many Occasions, signalized his *Mercy* towards them; and he also manifested a just *Displeasure* against their Miscarriages and Revolts. And from his Dealings towards them we may learn this useful Lesson, that no Pretence of special Favour or outward Priviledges will secure those from his just Displeasure, that allow themselves in a Course of presumptuous Sin and Disobedience. And this was the Use that the *Israelites* in after Ages were taught to make of those extraordinary Facts. As appears particularly from the lxxviiith *Psalms*; where, from the Consideration of God's Dealings with their Fa-

thers in the Wilderness, they are instructed to conceive of him, as a God *full of Compassion* and of *great Mercy*, and, at the same Time, as a Being of infinite *Justice* and *Purity*. And the Apostle makes the same Use of it in 2 *Cor.* x. 11.

Thus, it appears, that the Author's Objections against the Miracles of *Moses*, drawn from the End for which they were wrought, will not bear. On the other Hand, an Argument may be brought from the Nature of those Miracles, and the End for which they were wrought, to prove that they could not be the Works of an *evil* Being. For can it be thought that an evil Being (if he had been able to have performed all those glorious Miracles, which is very absurd to suppose) would have exerted himself in such amazing and extraordinary Acts of Power and Dominion for such Purposes as these; to triumph over *Idols*, and confound the chief Patrons and Propagators of Idol-worship; to punish *Tyranny* and Oppression, and manifest his Abhorrence of *Vice* and Wickedness; to establish and give Attestation to a Law and Polity, the great and fundamental Design of which was to establish the Worship and Adoration of the one only living and true God, in Opposition to the then prevailing *Idolatry* and *Polytheism*; the *moral* Precepts of which were pure and excellent, and its *Rituals* wisely contrived; and which would have been effectual, if carefully observed, to preserve those to whom it was given from the idolatrous Rites and corrupt Customs of the neighbouring Nations? If this cannot, without great Absurdity, be supposed, then those Miracles, which evidently transcended all the Art and Power of Man, must have been wrought either by the immediate Power of God himself, or which comes to the same Thing in this Case, by subordinate good Beings, acting under him, and by his Direction; and, consequently, must

must be regarded, as yielding an illustrious Testimony to the Divine Mission of *Moses*, and to the Divine Original and Authority of his Laws, in Attestation of which they were wrought.

There is one Passage more which this Writer has relating to the Design and Use of *Moses's* Miracles, which I shall here take Notice of; it is in p. 61. where he observes, that *God had never left himself without a standing and most glorious Witness and Proof of his Being and Perfections to Mankind, infinitely superior to the Evidence of all those Miracles of Moses, supposing them to have been really wrought; which could only astonish and confound, but not possibly prove the Truth and Righteousness of such a Religion as that. The moral Law could need no Proof from Miracles, as depending upon a much clearer and superior Proof before; and the ceremonial Law was incapable of any Proof at all, as having any Thing of Religion in it.* But since we find that notwithstanding the standing Proofs of a Deity in the Works of Creation and Providence, the Nations were generally fallen into *Idolatry* and the Worship of inferior Deities, and this coloured over with artful and specious Pretences, as well as into a great *Corruption* of Manners; will any Man pretend to prove, that it was unworthy or unfit for the great Lord and Governor of the Universe, to interpose by extraordinary Exertions of his own Divine Power and Dominion, to awaken Men to a Sense of his supreme Majesty and Glory, and to give Attestation to Laws, the principal Design of which was expressly to forbid all *Idol-worship*, or the Worship of inferior Deities, and the Worship of God by *Images*; and which also exhibited a System of pure and excellent *Morals*, in plain and express Precepts, enjoined and confirmed by a Divine Authority, which must needs give a mighty additional Weight and Force to them? As to our Author's

thor's Pretence, that the ceremonial Injunctions were incapable of any Proof at all, as having any Thing of Religion in them; this depends upon this Principle, that God cannot command or enjoin any Thing of a *ceremonial* Nature to be used in Religion at all; a Principle highly absurd in it self, and contrary to what this Author himself elsewhere allows, who acknowledges that God can, if he thinks fit, prescribe Things of a *positive* Nature. See *Moral Phil.* Vol. I. p. 87, 88. And, indeed, Things of this Kind may be so circumstanced as to be *subservient* to the main Ends of Religion; they may be instituted for wise Purposes. Such evidently were some of the ritual Injunctions of the Law of *Moses*; and we have Reason to think so of all the rest, tho' we may not be able to assign the particular Reasons of them at this Distance. And, therefore, such a Series of glorious Miracles, wrought in Attestation of a Body of Laws, containing such ritual Injunctions as well as moral Precepts, may be reasonably regarded, as giving an Attestation to those ritual Injunctions, as making up a Part of those Laws. And as to what the Author there adds, concerning the Absurdity of making a Law, enjoining such ceremonial Rites to be the *irreversible unalterable Will of God*, this is wrong represented. That Law, in the ritual Part of it, was never designed to be *irreversible and unalterable*, but was only assigned to be in Force till a more perfect Dispensation should succeed, to which it was intended to be preparatory and subservient.

Let us now proceed to what our Author offers with Regard to the Miracles wrought by our *Lord Jesus Christ*. And here, first, he would persuade us, that Christ's Miracles were not done at all with a View to prove his Divine Mission, or the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrines, but only to procure him a sufficient Degree of Attention from the People, &c.

&c. For that they *having heard of nothing but Miracles, and having been settled in nothing but what had been confirmed and proved by Miracles, it was absolutely necessary for him to work more and greater Miracles than had been done before, without which he could never have gained any Regard to the most obvious Truths from so stupid a Generation, &c.* He adds, that *their Attention being once procured, it was the native intrinsic Evidence of eternal, immutable, Divine Truth, that convinced the Understanding, and made its own Way to the Hearts and Consciences of Men. And that tho' Miracles might be necessary to make Way for this, and procure Attention, they could be no proper Evidence or additional Proof of it, p. 33, &c.*

But since our Saviour was undoubtedly the best Judge of the Design of his own Miracles, it is but just to consider the Account he himself gives of them. It is evident, that he speaks of himself all along as sent from God, in an extraordinary Manner, as a Person of wonderful Dignity, the *only-begotten Son of God*, in a most eminent and transcendent Sense, in which that Character can be attributed to no other, and as perfectly acquainted with the Father's Will. And that, accordingly, he claimed their Regard to his Mission as divine; he spoke to them as with a Divine Authority, and urged it upon them as their indispensable Duty to believe in him, and obey him. Now what were the Proofs and Evidences he brought of this his Divine Authority and Mission? It is undeniably evident from the Passages I cited in my former Book, p. 28. that he himself appeals to the illustrious Miracles he performed, as plain and sufficient Proofs and Evidences of it. These his Miracles he represents as *Works which his Father had given him to finish*; yea, that it was the *Father that dwelt in him that did these Works*; that they were wrought by

by the *Holy Ghost*, and by the *Finger*, that is, the *Power* of God. He expressly represents them as a Testimony given to him by God himself; and that they *bore Witness* to him, that the *Father had sent* him; and that he was *in the Father*, and the *Father in him*. And, accordingly, he urges his wonderful Works as a Reason why they should not merely attend to him, but *believe* in him, and receive with an unshaken Faith the Declarations he made, and the Doctrines he taught in his Father's Name. See *John* v. 36. x. 24, 25, 37, 38. xiv. 10, 11. *Matth.* xii. 28, 31. *Luke* xi. 20. From all which Passages it is extremely evident, that our Saviour represents the Miracles he performed, as really and in themselves a just and valid *Testimony* to the Divinity of his Mission, and to the Truth and Certainty of his Doctrines. And, accordingly, it is manifest, that he appeals to his Miracles as Proofs, in Cases where it cannot be pretended that there was any *intrinsic* Evidence in the Nature of the Thing to support his Declarations. So in the fifth Chapter of *John*, he had declared, that *as the Father raiseth the Dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will*; that the Father had given him Authority to execute Judgment; and that all that were *in the Graves should bear his Voice, and should come forth to the Resurrection of Life, or of Damnation*. What was the Evidence upon which the *Jews* were to believe these Declarations? Was there any Thing in the Nature of the Thing that could merely by its own intrinsic Evidence persuade the *Jews*, that Christ was the Person appointed by the Father to raise the Dead and judge the World? Will our Author say, in this Case, that it was *the native intrinsic Evidence of immutable eternal Truth* that convinced their Understandings? No. The Credit of these Declarations rested not merely on the *Nature of the Thing*, but on

on the *Proofs* he gave of his Divine Mission, that he was indeed extraordinarily sent of God, and that what he delivered, as from God, was true, as being confirmed by the Testimony of God himself. And, accordingly, after having made those Declarations, he expressly appeals to his Miracles, as bearing Testimony to him in a Manner that could not be denied or contested, see *ver.* 36.

The only Proof this Writer brings, that our Saviour did not produce his Miracles as Evidences of his Divine Mission, or of his being a true Prophet sent from God, is this; that when the *Pharisees* attributed his Miracles to a Confederacy with *Beelzebub*, the Prince of the Devils; our Saviour answered them, *If I by Beelzebub cast out Devils, by whom do your own Sons cast them out? therefore they shall be your Judges.* Which Words suppose, that their own Sons, or their own Party, cast out Devils by some Means, and to some Ends and Purposes or other; which was, doubtless, to support their own Superstition, or to maintain their usurped Dominion over the Understandings and Consciences of Men, by the specious and plausible Pretence of Miracles, as a Proof of Divine Authority, p. 35.

It is hard to know what our Author would bring this Argument to prove: Does he intend it for a Proof, that our Saviour here supposes or grants, that the *Pharisees* or any false Prophets wrought or could work as glorious Miracles in Confirmation of their own Superstition and Tyranny, as those which he himself performed? It is impossible that this should be his Intention in this Passage: Because it is undeniably manifest, from the Passages already produced, that he appeals upon all Occasions to his Miracles; and all along goes upon this Foundation, that none but one that was extraordinarily sent of God could perform such Works as he did. He expressly declares, speaking of the Scribes
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and Pharisees, and Rulers of the *Jews*, that rejected him, that if he *had not done the Works among them which no other Man did, they had not had Sin*, *John xv. 24.* which plainly implies, that the Miracles he wrought were such as no Deceiver could perform; and that they were proper Proofs and Evidences of his Divine Mission, and of the Truth of what he taught and delivered in the Name of God.

What then is the Argument the Author would found upon this Passage? The utmost that can be made of it is this, that there were some among the *Jews*, and of whom the Pharisees had a good Opinion, that did *cast out Devils*. And, for any thing that appears to the contrary, they might really be good Men, who were enabled to perform some extraordinary Works of this Kind for the Good of Mankind, and for the Relief of the Afflicted and Oppressed, without a particular View to the Attestation of any Doctrines. Nor doth it appear, that those that did these Works set up for Teachers at all; tho' this Writer, without the least Proof, supposes that they wrought these Miracles in *Confirmation of the peculiar Superstitions* of the Pharisees; whereas, if they were wrought in Testimony of any Thing at all, it was in Testimony to the supreme Power and Glory of the only true God, whom the *Jews* worshipped, in Opposition to the Heathen Deities and Demon-Worship. But the Truth is, it doth not appear, that there were then any among the *Jews* that did really *cast out Devils*, nor doth our Saviour's Argument necessarily suppose it. The People were mightily struck with the Evidence of his Miracles, and concluded from thence, that he must be *the Son of David*, i. e. the promised Messiah, *Matth. xii. 22, 23.* And this, by the Way, manifestly shews, that the Miracles he performed were of an extraordinary and peculiar Nature.

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And if any other, at that Time, pretended to perform any wonderful Works, it is plain that the People themselves were convinced, that there was a vast Difference between him and them, and between his Works and theirs *. The Pharisees, to take off the Force of this Impression, did not pretend that there were Persons among themselves that wrought as great Miracles as he; which, undoubtedly, they would have done, if they could have said it with the least Appearance of Truth; because this would have plainly shewed, that his doing such Works, which many others performed as well as he, could not be a Proof or Evidence that he was the *Christ*. But it is evident they could not say this; and therefore were forced to have Recourse to a very absurd Pretence, *viz.* That he *cast out Devils by Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils*. This carried an Intimation in it, that his Miracles were indeed extraordinary, and of a Nature far superior to any Works that other Persons performed, but that this was owing to his being assisted by the *Prince of the Devils*, and whose Power and Dominion was far superior to all the rest. Our Saviour shews the Absurdity of this, both by a *direct* Argument from the Nature of the Thing, and by an Argument *ad hominem*. The *direct* Argument is drawn from the great Absurdity of supposing that Satan *should cast out Satan*; as if that subtil and malicious Spirit would enter into a Confederacy to exert his own Power for the Good of Mankind, and to dispossess his own Associates, and thus engage against the Interests of his own Kingdom. The other Argument was *ad hominem*. *If I by Beelzebub cast out Devils, by whom do your Children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your Judges.* There were several among the Jews, at

* We find the People, on another Occasion, saying, *It was never so seen in Israel, Matth. ix. 33.*

that Time, that pretended to be Exorcists, and to cast out Devils: An Instance of this we have in the Sons of Sceva, mentioned *Acts* xix. 13. Now the Pharisees were far from charging those Persons as acting in a Confederacy with Satan. Our Saviour, therefore, urges them with this to shew their unreasonable Partiality, and the Malice and Injustice of their Charge. But this does not necessarily suppose that any of them did really cast out Devils, or that our Saviour himself thought so. It was enough that they pretended to do it, and that the Pharisees acknowledged it, or pretended to acknowledge it. For, in this Case, the Force of the Argument was still the same, and they were manifestly self-condemned, which was all our Saviour intended by it.

As to what this Writer pretends, that our Saviour there laid the whole Stress of his Argument, not upon the extraordinary Nature of his Works, but upon the *Ends* and Purposes for which they were performed; and that he insisted upon it, that his Miracles were all exerted for the Good of Mankind; and not only for their outward temporal Good, but to enlighten their Understandings, and bring them to the true Knowledge of God and of themselves, &c. Tho' it be very true in it self, that his Miracles were designed for the Good of Mankind, spiritual and temporal, yet it is not true that this is what our Saviour here insists upon in his Argument with the Pharisees. There is not one Word here offered to this Purpose. And whereas this Writer takes upon him to affirm, that abstracting from the End for which our Saviour's Miracles were wrought, the Plea of the Scribes and Pharisees, as to any Argument from Miracles, must have been as good as Christ's own Plea, and have gone as far, p. 36. This goes upon the Supposition,

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that the Scribes and Pharisees performed Miracles equal to those of Christ. A Supposition which is absolutely false, and which they themselves never had the Confidence to pretend. I add, that in this very Passage we are now considering, our Saviour plainly supposes that the Miracles he wrought were such as manifested a Divine Agency; and that resisting them, was resisting the strongest Evidence. For it is on this Occasion that he represents the great Danger and unpardonable Guilt of the Sin or *Blasphemy* against the *Holy Ghost*, viz. ascribing the Works of God to the Power of Satan.

I need not take Notice of what our Author goes on to observe, That wicked Men might work Miracles, and that *Christ* himself supposes, that some that had *done wonderful Works in his Name*, should be rejected at the last Day as *Workers of Iniquity*, p. 36. This hath been fully considered and obviated in the Book he pretends to answer. See *Divine Authority*, p. 26, 384. But it may be proper to make some Remarks on what he offers concerning the *Faith of Healing*, which, he tells us, “ was indispensably necessary to the bodily Cures, “ whether the Person healed was a morally good “ or bad Man. *Dost thou believe? If thou believest, thou mayest be healed; thy Faith hath made thee whole; and be it unto thee according to thy Faith*; was the constant Language and “ indispensable Condition of those miraculous “ Cures.” He says, “ that this Faith only wrought “ by the Force and Power of Imagination, and “ must have had the Effects, whether it had been “ well or ill grounded.” He observes, that “ Christ “ could work few or no Miracles among his Neighbours, the *Galileans*, because of their Unbelief; “ and, that one should think, had the Miracles “ been intended as a Test of Truth, they ought “ chiefly

“ chiefly to have been wrought upon Unbelievers,
 “ as the most effectual Means of their Conviction
 “ and Conversion: But it is plain the Case was quite
 “ otherwise, p. 37, 38.”

The Design of all this seems evidently to be, to depreciate *Christ's* Miracles, as if the miraculous Cures he wrought were rather owing to the Strength of Fancy and *Imagination* in the Patient, than to *Power* in the Agent. But there are many of his Miracles, with Respect to which there can be no Pretence for alledging this. If the Strength of their own Imagination could have an Influence to heal the Persons themselves that were under the Malady, could that of others do it? Could the *Centurion's* Faith, (that is, because in this Author's Sense he had a strong Imagination himself, could this heal his dying Servant? Or could the *Ruler's* Faith heal his Son, and that in an Instant, and at a Distance? I suppose it will scarce be pretended, that in the Case of his *raising the Dead*, the Imagination of the dead Persons themselves was so strong, as to contribute to their own Resurrection. Or could the Faith of *Martha* and *Mary*, that is, as the Author understands it, the Strength of their Imagination, raise their Brother *Lazarus* from the Grave, after he had lain dead there four Days? If Christ ordinarily required Faith in those whom he healed, (tho' many Instances might be produced of his healing Persons without any previous requiring them to believe; as in the Case of his healing the Man with the *withered Hand*, Mark iii. 3, 5. and the *impotent Man* that had an Infirmary thirty eight Years, John v. 5, 7, 8. and in the Case of his healing the *High-Priest's* Servant that had his Ear cut off, and who was one of those that came to apprehend him;) but if he ordinarily required *Faith* in those on whom he wrought his Miracles, the Design is plain, it

was to let them see what was the true and proper End of his Miracles; that it was not merely to do Acts of Kindness to their Bodies, but to confirm his Divine Mission, and strengthen their Faith in him; and that their believing in him, and submitting to the Evidence he brought, was a proper Disposition of Mind, pleasing to God, and which tended to qualify them for partaking of his Benefits. As to our Author's Insinuation, that Christ ought to have wrought his Miracles for the *Conviction and Conversion* of Unbelievers; but that this was not the Case. 'Tis certain that this was one great Design of *Christ's* Miracles; and accordingly they had this Effect, that many that did not believe in him before, were brought by the Evidence of his Miracles to believe; tho' where Persons manifested an invincible Hardness and Infidelity, they were justly left to the Effect of their own Obstinacy. And when it is said that he *could not do many mighty Works* among his Countrymen of *Nazareth*, *because of their Unbelief*, it is plain this was not owing to any want of Power in him to perform his mighty Works; but when he saw them so obstinate and hardened in their Incredulity, that no Miracles would have an Influence upon them, and that instead of giving a due Attention to his Doctrine they rejected it, and went about to kill him; he judged them unworthy to have many Miracles wrought among them, tho' he did some. And both in Scripture and other Writings, it is a very usual Way of speaking, that Persons *cannot do a Thing*, which, for good Reasons, they do not think fit to do.

I shall only, before I leave this Section, take Notice of one Thing more, which this Writer has advanced with as much Confidence as if it were certainly true, and he could prove it; and that is, that

when St. Paul came to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, we hear but very little of any Miracles wrought among them*. He had a Gospel to preach, and Doctrines to be delivered to them that must make their own Way, and force Conviction as soon as they came to be duly considered, p. 42. The contrary to this is so true, that almost all the Miracles we read of, that were done by St. Paul, were wrought among the Gentiles, and for their Conviction, to bring them to the Acknowledgment of the Truth. Thus, *Acts* xv. 12. we find that Barnabas and Paul declared what Miracles and Wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. The great Miracles he wrought, during his Stay at *Ephesus*, were wrought not merely before the Jews, but principally before the Greeks, and had an Influence to convert them to the Faith. *xix.* 10, 11, &c. 17, 18. To the *Corinthians*, who had been for the most Part Gentiles, he declares, that truly the Signs of an Apostle were wrought by him among them, in Signs, and Wonders, and mighty Deeds, *1 Cor.* xii. 12. And to the *Romans*, giving an Account of his preaching the Gospel among the Gentiles, and the Progress he had made, he speaks of the Things which Christ had wrought by him, to make the Gentiles obedient by Word and Deed,

* We find St. Paul, in his admirable Discourse to the *Attians*, appeals to Christ's Resurrection from the Dead, as a certain Proof and Assurance to Mankind of his being appointed by God to judge the World, as he himself had declared, *Acts* xviii. 31. And elsewhere the same Apostle saith, that Christ was declared to be the Son of God with Power by the Resurrection from the Dead, *Rom.* i. 4. From whence, it is evident, that in the Judgment of this great Apostle, for whom our Author professes so great a Regard, Miracles may be of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, as to yield a proper and sufficient Attestation to the Truth of a Person's Divine Mission, and to the Authority of his Doctrine.

through mighty Signs and Wonders, by the Power of the Spirit of God, Rom. xv. 18, 19. And tho' no Part of St. Paul's Doctrine was contrary to the clear and evident Principles of right Reason, yet it is uncontestably evident, to any one that ever read his Epistles, that several of the Doctrines he taught were such as could never have been proved by Reason alone, or have made their Way to the Minds of Men merely by their own native Force and intrinsic Evidence; and the proper Proof of which rested on the Evidence there was of his having received what he taught by Revelation from God, and being under the unerring Guidance of his Holy Spirit. And, it is certain, that this was what he himself pretended to, and on that Account claimed a Regard to the Doctrines which he preached, as of Divine Authority. As hath been fully proved in my former Book, p. 371, 372.

Thus I have considered every Thing this Writer has to shew, that Miracles can in no Case be proper Proofs and Evidences of the Divine Mission of any Person, or the Truth and Divine Authority of any Doctrine; and, particularly, that the Miracles wrought by *Moses*, and these wrought by our Lord *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles, even taking the Account of them for true, as given in the sacred Writings, were not such Proofs and Evidences. It is very likely, that in his great *Sufficiency* he may pronounce concerning what I have here said, as well as he has done concerning what was said on this Subject in my former Book, that it is *entirely oratorical and declamatory, without any Thing of Argument in it*, and that it is to no Purpose to follow me in such a *Wild-Goose Chase*. And the World, no doubt, by this Time, must be so well acquainted with the Ability, the Candor, and Modesty

of this Writer, as to take his bare Word for it that it is so.

I have hitherto proceeded upon the Supposition of the Truth of the miraculous Facts, recorded to have been done at the first Establishment of the *Jewish* and *Christian* Dispensation. If the Question be, what Reason there is to think that those Facts are *true*, and to be depended on; I answer, that they come to us with all the *Evidence* that can be reasonably desired, or that the Nature of the Thing will admit of, and it were perfectly absurd and unreasonable to desire more. The only Way that all Mankind do, and must depend upon, for knowing past *Facts*, is either by *oral* Tradition, which may indeed serve to preserve the Remembrance of some principal Facts, but is not much to be depended on for an exact Conveyance of Laws, Doctrines, and the particular Circumstances of Fact; or by authentic *Records* written at the Time when the Facts were done, and the Laws given. And all the World owns, that these may, in many Cases, be so circumstanced, that we cannot reasonably doubt of the Facts and Laws so transmitted. If God should, in his great Goodness, make an extraordinary Revelation of his Will, concerning Matters of great Importance to Mankind, the Possibility, and even Usefulness of which our Author pretends not to deny; and if, to convince the World of the Truth and Divinity of that Revelation, he should cause it to be accompanied with the most illustrious miraculous Attestations; in this Case it would be sufficient that those Attestations were given when that Revelation was first published to the World*. And this being

* That to desire that those miraculous Attestations should be continually repeated, would be a most unreasonable Demand. I have shewn in my former Book, p. 38, 39.

once done, and the Authority of those Doctrines and Laws fully established, all that would be necessary for the Use of Mankind, in succeeding Ages, would be this; that those Laws and Doctrines, together with an Account of those extraordinary miraculous Attestations, should be *transmitted* in such a Manner, and with such a Degree of Evidence, as might be safely depended upon, and give a sufficient reasonable Assurance, that these are the Laws or Doctrines that were originally given as by Revelation from God, and that these Facts were done. And this is the Case of the *Mosaic* and *Christian* Revelation. The Laws and Doctrines of both were at first published in the most open and publick Manner. Those of *Moses* were delivered to a whole Nation, who were to be governed by those Laws, in their successive Generations. The Christian Laws and Doctrines were immediately published throughout a considerable Part of the then known World, by Persons divinely commissioned to that Purpose. The Facts whereby both the Mosaic and Christian Revelation was attested were done in *publick* View, before great Numbers of Persons; they were of such a Nature, and attended with such Circumstances, such Evidence of their Reality, that those that were Eye and Ear-witnesses of them could not be deceived in them themselves, or doubt of their Reality, without renouncing the Testimony of all their *Senses*. Upon the Credit of these Facts, as undeniably true and evident, those Laws and Doctrines were immediately received by great Numbers who had all possible Opportunities of knowing whether those Facts were true; and many of whom were deeply prejudiced against the Laws, &c. so attested. The Remembrance of those Doctrines and Facts was not merely handed down by oral Tradition,

tion, but they were immediately committed to *Writing*; and these Writings were *published* in that very Age, and among the Persons that could not but know whether those Accounts were true. The Writings containing an Account of the Law of *Moses*, and the Facts whereby it was attested, were published by *Moses* himself before his own Death. Nor were they to be concealed or kept private in a few Hands, but by the express Appointment of the Law it self were to be made known and considered by all the People, who were carefully to instruct their Children in the Knowledge both of the Laws and Facts. And accordingly we find that Nation, in all their various Revolutions, still in Possession of those Laws, and still preserving a Remembrance of those extraordinary Facts. And, indeed, there was all possible Provision made in the Law it self for keeping up the constant Remembrance of those Facts by several remarkable Constitutions, which were designed for this very Purpose. Those Writings are still regarded, as containing the Rule both of their civil and religious *Policy*, from which, even in the Times of their greatest Degeneracy, they never totally and universally apostatiz'd; and therefore were still looked upon by many among them with Veneration, and their Sacredness and Divine Authority acknowledged. And if we examine the Writings themselves, they bear all the Characters of genuine Antiquity, and the original Simplicity. Nor have any Alterations been made in them in those Instances, in which it may be justly supposed the *Jeros*, in succeeding Ages, would have alter'd them, if they durst have attempted to corrupt them at all.

And with respect to the original *Christian* Records, they were immediately dispersed in the very Age in which they were first written, that is, in the
Age

Age in which the Laws were published, and the Facts were done. In that Age they were dispersed into many Hands in different Parts of the World, received with great Veneration, read in the publick Assemblies, soon translated into various Languages, ever since constantly appealed to by Friends and Enemies, by Persons of different Sects and Parties, and with different Views, large Portions of them transcribed into the Writings of others, and commented upon. A general Corruption of them, either in the *Doctrines* or *Facts*, as the Case was circumstanced, if it had been attempted, would have been an impossible Thing. And it is evident, in Fact, that they have not been corrupted in Instances, where it might be supposed to have been the Interest and Inclination of some Persons to have corrupted them. Nothing appears in them of the Corruption of the following Ages. They carry all the Marks of genuine Purity and Simplicity that any Writings can possibly have. Upon the Whole, there is as much Evidence as can reasonably be desired, that these are the very *original* Laws and Doctrines, and the original Accounts of those Facts written in the very Age in which those Facts were done. And I do not see what can be reasonably expected more; unless we are resolved not to believe, except we ourselves, at this Distance, have ocular Demonstration of the Facts done in past Ages; which is, to demand a Thing absurd and impossible. All this is what I have largely shewn in a former Treatise, to which I refer'd in the Book this Author has undertaken to answer, p. 39. Yet he thinks fit frequently to represent me as taking the Facts for granted, without having offered the least Proof. But I know no Obligation I am under to repeat the Proof in every Book, when I had done it largely and fully before, to which no Answer has been yet returned.

I shall, however, take some Notice, in the next Chapter, of what he offers with regard to the Law of *Moses*, and the Facts whereby that Law was attested. And as to the original Records of *Christianity*, Mr. *Chapman* has fully shewn, that they are transmitted to us with unquestionable Evidence of their being genuine and uncorrupted in all material Points, both as to Doctrines and Facts. Our Author has not thought fit to answer what that learned Writer has urged on this Head, and yet persists as securely in repeating his general Clamours about the Uncertainty of human Testimony, as if nothing at all had been offered in this Case; or as if he himself had clearly confuted it.



C H A P. IV.

The Law of Moses is in it self reasonable and excellent. This doth not render the Attestation given it by Miracles needless; but strengthens and enforces it. The Covenant of Peculiarity not a vain Pretence and national Delusion. The Argument brought against it from the Authority of St. Paul, and the Nature of the Abrahamic Covenant, considered. The God of Israel not represented in Scripture as a national, local, tutelar Deity. The Author's strange Way of accounting for some of Moses's Miracles. The Extravagance of his Suppositions shewn. The Objections against his being the Author of the Pentateuch, considered and obviated. The Plan Moses laid down for the Conquest of Canaan, not inconsistent with the Nature of the Promise made to Abraham. Other Exceptions of this Writer, considered.

THE principal Design of my former Book was to vindicate the Mosaical and Christian Revelation against the Objections this Writer had brought against them. And before I enter'd on a particular Discussion of his Objections against the Law of Moses, I premised some general Considerations concerning the Nature and Design of that Law. It was shewn, that its moral Precepts were pure and excellent; that
its

its ritual Injunctions were appointed for wise Reasons ; that the whole Mosaick Constitution was designed for excellent Ends ; for preserving the Knowledge and Worship of the only true God in Opposition to all Idolatry, and for engaging those, to whom it was given, to the Practice of Righteousness : That it was a Constitution that answer'd many wise Purposes of Divine Providence, and was made subservient to the general Good of Mankind. This was in Opposition to the odious Representation this Writer has made of the Law of *Moses*, as if it was the worst Constitution in the World. In this last Book, which is professedly writ in Vindication of his former, he has been pleas'd to pass by what I had offer'd concerning the Excellency of that Law, and thinks it sufficient to observe, that by endeavouring to shew the Reasonableness and Excellency of that Law, I have *entirely overthrown and given up the Argument of my first Chapter*, concerning the Proof from *Miracles*. With this Observation he begins his second Section, p. 53, 54. But the Weakness of this Pretence, and the Consistency of the Scheme I advanced, has been fully shewn*. If I had affirmed, that the Reasonableness and good Tendency of the Mosaick Constitution was *alone* considered a sufficient Proof, that *Moses* had it by extraordinary Revelation from God, this would have been a contradicting my first Chapter, in which I say, that " the Reasonableness
 " of a Doctrine or Law will never *alone* prove that
 " the Man that teacheth that Doctrine, or bringeth
 " that Law, had it by immediate Revelation from
 " God." But, to say, that because I assert the Reasonableness and excellent Design of that Law, therefore I cannot *consistently* lay any Stress upon the extraordinary miraculous Attestations, that were

* See above, p. 99, 100, 101.

given to that Law, as Proofs of its Divine Authority, is a strange Way of arguing. On the contrary, this sets the Proof from Miracles in the strongest Light. For tho' it might be justly concluded, from the very Nature and Circumstances of those Miracles, that they were such as could never be done, nor would God suffer them to be done in Attestation of an Imposture; yet when to this it is farther added, that the main Design of that Law and Constitution was pure and excellent, for promoting the Worship of the only true God, and the Practice of Righteousness; this furnisheth a further Demonstration, that those Miracles were not wrought by evil Beings, and that, consequently, since they undeniably transcended all the Power of Man, they must have been wrought by God himself, or by good Beings, acting under his special Direction and Influence; and therefore may be justly regarded as sufficient Proofs, that *Moses*, in Attestation of whose Divine Mission they were done, was indeed *extraordinarily* sent of God; and that the Scheme of Laws, he professed to have received from God, did indeed come from God, and was of Divine Authority.

Our Author, after a Digression, in his rambling Way, concerning the *spiritual Scholastics*, &c. in which he saith nothing but what has been already fully considered and obviated, proceeds to offer something concerning the *Covenant of Peculiarity with the Jews*. I had shewn that there was nothing in this Constitution that can be proved to be inconsistent with the Divine Perfections, or to derogate from his universal Goodness; and that it was appointed for wise and valuable Ends; several of which were mentioned*. But our Author here gives us his Word for it, that it was all a *vain Pre-*

* See *Divine Authority*, p. 46, 47, 54.

tence, and national Delusion; in which their Prophets and Historians had greatly contributed to support, humour and encourage the Pride, Vanity and Superstition of the common People, p. 53, 56. Tho' soon after he is so kind as to excuse the Prophets, who might have good Reason from the Necessity of the Case, considering the Blindness and Obduracy of the People they had to deal with. And tho' some Enthusiasts may call this *Imposture*; yet, where it was necessary for the Good of a Nation, it must have been justifiable. It seems, the Prophets, according to him, were in the Right to encourage and humour the Pride, Vanity, and Superstition of that People, and to support them in a vain Notion and Delusion. And if any Man will presume to call this *Imposture* he will incur our Author's heavy Censure, and must be content to pass for an *Enthusiast*. He had talked at the same Rate in his former Book, that a wise and good Man may falsify and deceive without Injury, and secure his own private Interest for the publick Good. It is lawful, it seems, to pretend Inspiration, to forge Miracles and Revelations, whenever it is apprehended that this may be for the Good of a Nation. This is one Instance of our Author's Application of his Rule of moral Truth and Fitness, and of judging of the Fitness of a Thing by its Connection with our Happiness. There may be a moral Truth and Fitness even in *Falshood*, when we apprehend it tends to our own or others Good. *Pious Frauds* are very innocent Things, and must not be found Fault with any more. There is either no real *Evil* in Falshood and *Imposture*; and, if so, I cannot see upon what Foundation it can be asserted, what all Mankind have hitherto acknowledged, that it is impossible for God to lie; or if it be in it self evil, it is sanctified by the Goodness of the *End*, and then I cannot see but the same Pre-

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tence may justify false Oaths and Perjuries. In this, it must be owned, our Author's Morality and Finess of Things is widely different from that taught us in *Scripture*, and particularly by the Apostle *Paul*, who will not allow that a *Lie* is sanctified under Pretence that the *Glory* of God is promoted by it, and pronounces that the *Damnation* of those is *just*, that *teach* that *we may do Evil that Good may come of it*, Rom. iii. 7, 8.

But not to insist any longer upon this, * he asks, "How shall we know or prove that God did enter into a special Relation to that People? Must we take their own Words, or the proud superstitious Imagination of their own People, for it? p. 58." I answer, That it is proved by the same *Evidence* by which the Divine Authority of the Law of *Moses* is proved, which was in its very original Constitution in the Nature of a special *Covenant* with that People; in which God condescended to enter into a particular Relation to them, and erected them into a peculiar *Polity* for wise and valuable Ends; and, consequently, it was confirmed by the Testimony of God himself, who, as hath been already shewn, did in an extraordinary Manner bear *Witness* to the Divine Mission of *Moses*, and to the Divine Original and Authority of the Laws he delivered in his Name. And, I hope, whatever our Author thinks the Prophets would do, he will hardly pretend that God himself would endeavour to *humour and encourage the Pride, and Vanity, and Superstition* of that People, by making them believe he intended to enter into a special Relation to them, when he did not.

* In this Way of talking, as well as in several other Things, our Author treads in the Steps of Dr. *Tindal*, the Absurdity of whose Rule of judging of Truth or Falshood, by its Tendency, has been elsewhere exposed. See *Answer to Christianity*, Vol. I. p. 245--256.

But

But, if we will believe him, he has St. Paul on his Side, who has, in a Manner demonstratively set this Covenant of Peculiarity aside, by proving that the Covenant of Promise, which God made with Abraham, had no peculiar Relation to Abraham's natural Seed, or to the Jewish Nation, but extended equally to all Mankind, or to all the sincere Worshipers of the one true God, in all Nations, and at all Times, to the End of the World, p. 58, 59. The Author, as his Manner is, triumphs upon this, as if it were perfect Demonstration. But it is hard to see where the Force of this Reasoning lies. The Apostle sets himself to prove, that Abraham, in whom the Jews boasted as their Father, was justified by Faith: He believed God, and it was accounted to him for Righteousness, even when he was yet uncircumcised: And God promised, that in him, and his Seed, should all Nations be blessed. This Promise related to the Blessing that should come upon all Nations, through Jesus Christ, who was to come of the Seed of Abraham. And, consequently, all true Believers, even among the Gentiles, were to have an Interest in that Blessing, being justified by Faith as Abraham was, without the Observation of the Law of Moses; which came after that Promise, and was not designed to repeal or abrogate it. This is the Apostle's Reasoning, Gal. iii. Rom. iv. And it is strong and cogent against those judaizing Teachers, who urged, that it was absolutely necessary, that even the Gentiles should be circumcised, and observe the Law, in order to their being justified and saved. But doth it follow from thence, that God never entred into any special Relation to the People of Israel at all, nor erected them into a peculiar Polity? It is evident, the Apostle neither saith nor intendeth any such Thing. On the contrary, in that very Chapter, the Author seems to

refer to it, *Gal. iii.* He plainly supposes, that the Law of *Moses* was really *ordained* of God, thro' the Ministry of Angels, *ver. 19.* but denies, that it was intended to *disannul* that *Promise* that had been made long before, concerning God's blessing all Nations in *Abraham* and his Seed, or *make it of none Effect*, *Ver. 17.* And then goes on to shew, That the Law was designed only in a Subserviency to that *Promise, till the Seed should come to whom the Promise was made.* That it was designed to be a *Schoolmaster* to lead Men unto *Christ*; that it kept them under a strict Discipline and *Bondage*, like that which an *Heir* is under whilst he is subject to *Tutors and Governors, till the Time appointed of the Father.* But now Men are freed from it by the Coming of *Christ*, the proper End of it being answered; and all Distinction is to be taken away. There is now *neither Jew nor Greek*, but all are *one in Christ Jesus*, *ver. 23, 24, 28. chap. iv. 1--4.*

This Writer asks, *p. 58. How it appears, that this People, viz. the Jews, were ever such peculiar Servants of the Almighty, or that they were ever under any such special Relation of Adoption, or Sonship, as they pretended to?* I answer, It appears, among other Things, by the Testimony of the Apostle *Paul* himself, whom he pretends to produce to the contrary; who expressly declares, that *to them pertained the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the Promises*, *Rom. ix. 4. iii. 2.* And it is undeniably manifest, that tho' there was a general Promise made to *Abraham*, that all Nations should be *blessed* in him, and in his Seed, that is, in *Christ*, who was to proceed from him; to which Promise the Apostle refers in his Arguings on this Subject; yet there was also a particular Promise and Covenant of a more limited Nature, and more immediately relating to his Posterity by *Isaac*, in which

which God engaged to give them the *Land of Canaan for a Possession*, and that he would be *their God*, viz. in a special Relation, *Gen. xvii. 8.* And the peculiar Constitution of *Moses* was in Consequence of this Promise and Covenant made with *Abraham*, and was a Fulfilment of it, *Exod. ii. 24.* But there was nothing either in that particular Promise made to *Abraham* relating to his Seed by *Isaac*, nor in the peculiar Constitution established by *Moses* in the Name of God, that was at all inconsistent with the general Promise made to *Abraham* relating to *all Nations* being blessed in him. Nor did it follow, that because God erected the People of *Israel* into a peculiar Polity, and gave them peculiar distinctive Rites for wise Purposes, that therefore he would not accept those of any other Nation that truly believed in him, and worshipped and served him in Sincerity. Other Nations were not by this put more out of the Favour of God, or into a worse Condition than they were in before. God's *universal* Goodness still continued the same that it was, and all that *feared God*, and *worked Righteousness*, tho' not belonging to that peculiar Polity, were still accepted and justified, as *Abraham* himself had been. And, accordingly, under the *Mosaick* Constitution, tho' no Idolaters were to be tolerated in the Land of *Israel*, yet all that worshipped the true God, tho' not belonging to their Body, nor observing their particular Rites, were to be treated by the *Israelites* with great Kindness, as Persons whom God himself accepted.

I had observed, that the peculiar Constitution of the *Jews* was of great Advantage for keeping up the Knowledge and Worship of the one true God in the World. This he treats as a mere *Imagination*. For it is certain, that no other Nation ever received the Worship of one God from this Nation; but they themselves were continually running into

Idolatry, and worshipping from Time to Time the Gods of several other Nations that conquered them, p. 60. It will be easily acknowledged, that they were often inticed to fall into a Conformity to the vicious and idolatrous Customs and Practices of neighbouring Nations; and that principally when Peace and Luxury had corrupted them. This was a Fault, as they were circumstanced, great and inexcusable; but which is not extremely to be wondered at, considering the unaccountable Proneness of Mankind in all Ages to Idolatry, and to Vice and Sensuality, the usual Attendants of the Heathen Worship. And this shews the Wisdom of their peculiar Constitution. For hence it was, that even in the Times of their greatest Degeneracy, there were still many Persons among them who sincerely worshipped the only living and true God, free from *Idolatry*, and made a right Use of the Advantages they enjoyed. And how far the Knowledge of the true God might spread from them to other Nations, is more than this Writer can tell, notwithstanding all his Confidence*; and the Instances I produced, and which he has not thought fit to meddle with, render it highly probable. And it was certainly a signal Advantage, that they were kept for so many Ages a distinct *Polity*, set a-part to the Worship and Acknowledgment of the only true God, amongst whom the Prophecies and Promises, relating to the Redeemer to come, were kept distinct, and the Faith of his Coming preserved, and the World prepared for a more glorious and perfect Dispensation that was to succeed. And tho' our Author pretends, that *when Christianity came to be preached, Judaism was the greatest Obstacle to it; and that the Miracles of Moses, as supposed to have*

* See *Several Letters*, containing *Directions for the Conduct of young Persons*; with an *Enquiry into Natural and Revealed Religion*. Letter VII.

“stoned the Prophet who should have come to them with any such Doctrine, p. 64.” I am so used to this Author’s Way of representing Things, that I am not surprized at this, or at any Thing else that he advances, tho’ ever so contrary to Truth and Decency. There is scarce any Thing capable of a clearer Proof than that the *Jews*, tho’ they considered God as having made himself known to *Israel* in a particular Manner, and as having entred into a special Relation to them, yet did not regard him as a national, local, tutelar Deity, as the Heathens regarded their Idols*, but as the Lord of the Universe, the Creator and Governor of the World, the God of Nature, who rules all Things by his Providence, and fills Heaven and Earth with his Presence. It is undeniably evident that this is the Idea under which he is continually represented throughout the whole *Old Testament*; in the Law, in the Prophets, in the Psalms, and sacred historical Writings, and in all their Acts of Devotion, as there recorded, whether offered up by private Persons, or offered publickly in the Name of all the People. Their Language is still entirely different from that of other Nations, and from what it would have been if they had had the Notions of

* It ought to be observed, that those that believed topical, local, tutelar Deities, did universally believe, that there were more Gods than one. One Nation, one City and Country, had its local tutelar Deity as well as another. And hence they had their Forms of *Evocation*, or persuading the tutelar Gods of other Countries to abandon the Protections of them. But will any Man pretend to say, that it was the Notion and Principle of the *Jews*, that there were many Gods; or that the Law or the Prophets countenanced them in this Notion? When, on the contrary, it is as clear as the Light, that this is entirely contrary to the very fundamental Constitution of the whole *Jewish* Law and Polity, in which nothing is more strongly inculcated than the Unity of God, or that there is no other God but one, even the supreme Lord of the Universe, who is alone to be acknowledged and adored.

God

God which this Writer thinks fit to ascribe to them. I will not, indeed, answer for all the common People among the *Jews*, any more than I will for all the common People among the Christians, or in our own Nation, that none of them ever entertained gross and unworthy Notions of the Deity; but this I will say, that there was great Care taken in their Laws and other Writings to prevent this, and inspire them with just and noble Sentiments of the supreme Being. Nor could they possibly regard God as a mere national *Idol*, or local Deity, whilst they adhered to their Laws, and were governed by them; and what Notions they might entertain when they forsook their Laws, and suffered themselves to be seduced into the Idolatries of the neighbouring Nations, is nothing to the Purpose to enquire.

Our Author next proceeds, *p. 65.* to say something about the *Miracles* of *Moses*, to shew that they were not really done, but only in Appearance; and the poor stupid People were made to believe, they saw those Things done before their Eyes, tho' all was Imposture and Delusion. With regard to their passing thro' the *Red Sea*, he observes, that the People not knowing the Way out of *Egypt*, might think there was no Way of going out of it but thro' the Sea; and as they were conducted only by Night, *Moses* made them believe, that the dry Ground which they marched over was the Bottom of the Sea, which God had miraculously cleared of all the Water-Rocks and Quick-Sands, &c. This, it must be owned, is very shrewdly conjectured. To which it should be added, that *Moses*, next Morning, made them believe they saw the whole Place, thro' which they had passed, covered with the Waves, tho' there was not one Drop of Water in the Place; and that they saw the Bodies of the *Egyptians*, who, it seems, had been drowned on dry

proved his Religion to be the true Religion, prevented and obstructed the Progress of Christianity more than the Heathen Idolatry did, p. 60, 61. Yet it is certain, in Fact, that the Law and the Prophets did make Way for receiving and spreading of Christianity, and was a great Advantage to it. And tho' the Body of the Jewish Nation, especially the chief Priests and Rulers, rejected our Lord Jesus Christ, and persecuted his Disciples, yet the first Harvest of Converts to the Christian Faith was among the Jews, and a greater Number of them in Proportion was converted to Christianity in that first Age, than of any other Nation whatsoever. Nor was any Thing of greater Advantage to Christianity, at its first Promulgation, next to the extraordinary Attestations with which it was accompanied, than this, that the Jews were then generally spread throughout the Roman Empire; their Scriptures were every where known; they had proselyted vast Numbers of the Gentiles from the Worship of Idols to the Worship and Acknowledgment of the true God; and among these the Gospel was first preached, and made a great Progress.

But this Writer has another extraordinary Attempt to shew, that the peculiar Polity of Moses answered no valuable Purpose at all: He asserts, that it would not have cured the People of Idolatry, even supposing they had kept his Law. He owns, indeed, that Moses confined all Worship and Obedience to one true God; and that no Doubt but he, and the Prophets after him, had just Notions enough of God, and of his spiritual divine Perfections; but he indulged the gross Vulgar or Body of the People, in a Sort of Worship not much unlike to that of the heathen, local, and tutelar Gods; and with the Gross of the People the God of Israel was a local tutelar God, p. 62. This he repeats on all

Occasions in his Book. He boldly affirms, without Disguise, that the God of *Israel* was an *Idol*. That "'tis very evident from the whole Story, that
 " this People had a local, oracular, and tutelar
 " God, who is called the God of *Israel*, as distinguished from the like residential Gods of *Egypt*,
 " *Philistia*, *Zidon*, and other Nations; and that
 " this was the God for whom the Priesthood was
 " instituted, and to whom the Sacrifices were offered, *p.* 134, 135. That the God of *Israel*,
 " who was supposed to reside in the Sanctuary, in
 " the Custody of the High Priest (as he is pleased
 " to express it) was a mere Cheat, and as much an
 " Idol as the tutelar, oracular, and residential Gods
 " of *Egypt* and other Nations, *p.* 172." I must own this Way of talking is to me very shocking. An Author ought to be sure, to Demonstration, that he is in the Right, before he ventures to bring such a Charge as this. For if it should prove to be the true God, whom he thus boldly arraigns and vilifies, it is no light Guilt to be found reproaching the living God. And what is the Proof that he brings to support this Charge? It amounts chiefly to this; that "God is represented as residing with
 " the Ark upon the Mercy-Seat, between the Cherubims, with a luminous Glory about him, ready
 " on all Occasions to be consulted by the People,
 " and give Answers by an audible Voice. And
 " that when the *Philistines* took the Ark, the
 " Priest, People, &c. were under a general Con-
 " sternation; they gave up their God for lost,
 " The *Glory was departed from Israel*: The *Enemy had robbed them of their God*."

I had sufficiently obviated this in the Book which he pretends to answer; and had shewn, that God's manifesting himself among the People of *Israel*, by a visible Cloud of Glory, and his giving Answers on some Occasions by an audible Voice, was in-

indeed a marvellous Instance of Goodness and Condescension, but cannot be proved to have any Thing in it absurd or unworthy of God, or inconsistent with his essential Perfections. Nor doth it follow, that therefore he is a finite *limited* Being, or that his Essence is circumscribed, or confined to the Place, where it pleaseth him thus peculiarly to manifest his Presence. Nor doth it appear that the *Jews* ever understood it so, who were every where taught in the Law to form the noblest Conceptions of the Deity, as the sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth *. It is not to be wondered at, that when the *Ark* was taken, they lamented that the *Glory* was departed from *Israel*; for it was their peculiar Glory that God had been pleased to enter into a special Relation to them, and had vouchsafed them extraordinary Tokens of his Favour and Presence; and his suffering the *Ark* of the Covenant to be taken by their Enemies, which was the *Symbol* of his special Presence, and an external Token of his Covenant and particular Relation to them, was a great Instance of his Displeasure, and must therefore give much Concern to all good Men among them. But they were far from thinking, that because the *Ark* was taken, therefore *the Enemy* had robbed them of *their God*; nor was this what they lamented, that *Jehovah* *their God* was taken, but that the *Ark* of *God* was taken. Nor was any of them ever so senseless as to think, that when the Temple was afterwards destroyed, *their God* was burnt in his own Palace by the idolatrous Babylonians; this is our Author's own Reflexion, p. 134. for the Impiety and Absurdity of which he alone is answerable: But the *Jews* were taught to entertain worthier and nobler Notions of the Deity. In the same Passage he seems to think it a sufficient Proof, that the God

* See *Divine Authority*, p. 71, 72.

that was worshipped among the *Jews* was not the true God, but an *Idol*, or local residential Deity, because *Sacrifices were offered to him*. But this, if it proved any Thing, would also prove, that the God whom the ancient *Patriarchs* worshipped, and particularly *Abraham*, of whom this Writer sometimes affects to speak with great Veneration, as a sincere Worshipper of the true God, was no more than an *Idol*, or a local, tutelar Deity. Sacrifices were used in the Divine Worship from the earliest Ages, and probably were of Divine Appointment, and instituted for wise Purposes, as I have elsewhere shewn*. And sufficient Care was taken, by many express Passages in the sacred Writings, to prevent the *Jews* from forming such gross Notions, concerning Sacrifices, as this Writer insinuates. See *Psalms* 1. 9---13. and many other Places to the same Purpose.

But farther, to shew that God was regarded among the People of *Israel*, as a local tutelar Deity, he produceth a Passage from 2 *Sam.* vii. concerning *David's* purposing to build an House for the Lord to dwell in, "which the Prophet *Nathan* forbade, alledging that God had hitherto walked in a Tent and Tabernacle, &c. And that tho' he intended to have a better and more commodious House to dwell in than ever he had before, yet not *David* himself, but his Son *Solomon* was to have the Honour of it, p. 63, 64." But, certainly, no Man that considers the sublime and admirable Descriptions, that *David* every where gives, of the Glory and Majesty of the Lord *Jehovah*, as the sovereign Lord of the Universe, and especially the noble Representations he makes of the Divine Immenity and Omnipresence in the cxxxixth *Psalms*,

* See *Divine Authority*, p. 190, 199.---See also *Answer to Christianity*, &c. Vol. I. p. 67, 68, 69.

and which he gave to the chief Musician to be employed in the publick Worship, can possibly suppose that when he purposed to *build a House for the Lord to dwell in*, he regarded him, or designed that the People should regard him, only as a *topical* God, like one of the Heathen Deities, whose Presence was to be confined there. When *Solomon* made that excellent Prayer at the Consecration of the Temple, he begins it with saying, *I have surely built thee an House to dwell in, a settled Place for thee to abide in for ever*. But that he was far from intending thereby to make such a mean Representation of the Deity as this Writer insinuates, is evident from those noble Expressions uttered in the same Prayer before all the People of *Israel*, who were convened on that Occasion; *But will God indeed dwell on the Earth? Behold, the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain thee, how much less this House which I have builded?* 1 Kings viii. 13, 27. When *Hezekiah* addressed himself solemnly to God for Protection against the Invasion of *Senacherib*, he begins his Prayer thus, *O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the Cherubims!* But must it be concluded from these Words, that therefore he regarded him only as a national local Deity? The contrary is extremely evident, from what he immediately adds, *Thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the Kingdoms of the Earth; thou hast made Heaven and Earth*. And then he goes on to represent him as infinitely superior to all the Idol-Deities whom the Heathens worshipped, 2 Kings xix. 15. It is plain, therefore, that those Expressions, so usual among the *Jews*, concerning the *House of God*, and his dwelling there, were not intended or understood by them as signifying, that the Lord *Jehovah*, whom they worshipped, was only a local residential Deity, like the tutelar Gods of other Countries; or as if his Presence was confined to the Temple or

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Tabernacle ; but that it was his Will that there they should offer up their solemn Worship to him, and there he was pleased to vouchsafe special Tokens of his gracious Presence. The *Syrians*, indeed, agreeably to the Notions they conceived of their own Deities, supposed that the *Hebrew* Gods might be *Gods of the Hills*, but not of the *Vallies*, *1 Kings* xx. 23, 28. And the idolatrous *Samaritan* Nations, that were brought in the Place of *Israel*, when the ten Tribes were carried away captive by the King of *Assyria*, regarded the God whom the *Israelites* worshipped as *the God of the Land* ; and *Rabshakeb*, in his blasphemous Speech, supposed the God of *Israel* was like the Gods of *Hamath*, *Arpad*, *Sepharvaim*, &c. which were topical tutelar Deities ; but it is manifest, that the *Jews* themselves were far from entertaining such Notions of the Lord *Yehovah*, but rejected this with Horror, as the highest Blasphemy. See *2 Kings* xviii. 34, 35. xix. 16--19.

Yet this Writer has the Confidence to say, that
 “ whoever will observe the Language and Style of
 “ the *Hebrew* Historians all along, while they are
 “ accommodating themselves to the gross Notions
 “ and Superstitions of the common People, must
 “ see that they speak of God, as a national, local
 “ and tutelar Deity ; under which Notion the Po-
 “ pulace always conceived of him, and worship-
 “ ped him. They worshipped the true God there-
 “ fore only in Name, while they had the same
 “ Conceptions of him, that the Heathens had of
 “ their national Idols or false Gods. They could
 “ have no just Notions or Apprehensions of the
 “ infinite Perfections, universal Presence, and pro-
 “ vidential Government of God, as the common
 “ Father and Friend of Mankind, nor could they
 “ have born any such Representation of their pe-
 “ culiar Idol or national God, but would have
 “ stoned

dry Land, floating on the Waters, and their Chariots, &c. cast upon the Shore. With regard to the Promulgation of the Law at *Sinai*, he will have it, that the People heard nothing more than the *Voice of Thunder*, which they could not articulate, that is, they heard no Words, or articulate Voice at all; and yet *Moses* made that whole vast Multitude believe they heard the Voice of God, out of the midst of the Fire, distinctly pronouncing the *Ten Commandments*, when they heard no such Thing; and appeals to themselves concerning it, as a Thing they all knew, and the like of which no other Nation had ever heard or seen from the Foundation of the World. See *Deut. iv. 32, 33. v. 4, 22.* Our Author next tries his Hand upon the Miracle of bringing Water out of the *Rock*, by *Moses's* striking it with his Rod. And this he most ingeniously accounts for; *This People had never seen any fresh Water-springs in Egypt, and therefore seeing Water flow out of a Rock, must at first appear as wonderful to them as drying up the Sea, &c.* The Water, it seems, had been there all along. It had come flowing from the *Rock*, and had passed by their Tents; but the poor senseless Creatures could not see it, tho' they were, at that very Time, ready to perish for want of it. And when he brought them to the *Rock*, he made them believe, there was not one Drop of Water issuing out of it till he struck it with his Rod, tho' it was all the while gushing out in great abundance, a rapid Spring before their Eyes. To attempt a serious Answer to such wild Suppositions, would be to render my self as ridiculous as this Writer; and he must suppose these Nations to be as senseless as he makes the *Israelites* to be, if he imagines such Stuff as this can pass upon them. It were to be wished he had gone thro' the other Miracles, which he might easily have done in the same Way. He might

might have shewn, that *Moses* made above a Million of People believe that the *Mannab* fell about their Tents constantly six Days in the Week, and that they themselves gathered it, and fed upon it all along, for forty Years together, in the barren Defart, when there was no such Thing. But, it seems, there is one Way of accounting for all this, and that is, the great *Stupidity* of the *Israelites*, against which he inveighs on all Occasions. But it is not sufficient to suppose them very ignorant and stupid, except he can prove them quite *senseless*, that they could neither see, nor hear, nor feel, nor understand. They were, it seems, a Race of Creatures that happened some Way or other to have the *human* Shape, but they had nothing else belonging to Men; and thus continued throughout all their Generations. And yet the Wonder is, that this strange People, as appears from all their remaining Monuments, had far *juster* Notions of Religion than those that passed for the most polite and learned Nations upon Earth; and Numbers, even of the common People among them, except in the Times when they themselves were drawn from the Observation of their own Laws to a Compliance with the Opinions and Customs of the neighbouring Nations, had far *nobler* Notions of the only living and true God, and the Worship due to him, in Opposition to all Idolatry, not only than the common People even of *Greece* and *Rome*, but than many of their wise Men and *Philosophers* themselves.

But our Author has got one Instance, which he produces as a *Proof of their more than brutish Stupidity*; and from whence we must conclude them *more brutish than their Cattle*, and not endued with any common Sense or human Faculties, p. 27, 67. And that is, their worshipping the golden Calf so soon after the extraordinary Promulgation of the Law. I will agree, that this was a strange Instance

of Stupidity and Guilt, and so I look upon all Idolatry to be, tho' it is a Folly the wisest Nations have been guilty of. But this Writer thinks proper, by his Representation of it, to make this Matter worse than it really was, tho' it was bad enough. He represents them as *ascribing their Deliverance to the Gods of Egypt*. But this is far from being true. It was the God of *Israel*, and not the *Egyptian* Deities, they intended to worship by this Symbol. They said, *These be thy Gods, O Israel*, or as it might very properly be rendered, *this is thy God, O Israel* (for it is well known that the Word *Elohim* there made use of, tho' plural in Construction, is often singular in its Signification, see *Gen. xx. 13. xxxv. 7.* and is so used in the present Case, *Nehem. ix. 18.*) *which brought thee out of the Land of Egypt*. And this is the Character under which God had described himself, when he gave the Ten Commandments. And accordingly we find *Aaron*, when he proclaimed a Feast on that Occasion, *proclaimed a Feast to the Lord, to Jehovah, Exod. xxxii. 5.* From whence it appears, that it was God *Jehovah* they intended to worship, tho' they took a wrong Way of doing it. *Moses* had been absent from them above a Month. They could not tell what was become of him, and probably thought he was consumed by the Fire, or taken up into Heaven, and would not return to them any more. They were weary of continuing any longer in that Station at *Sinai*, and wanted to be going forward, but they had a Mind to have a visible Symbol of the Divine Presence with them, a visible Representation of the Deity. And People, even those that have passed for learned and wise, have been very ingenious in all Ages, in finding out plausible Colours and Pretences to justify this. If it be urged, that this had been so expressly forbidden just before in the *second Commandment*,

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delivered with the most awful Solemnity, that it can scarce be conceived that they should be guilty of it; or if so, they must have been stupid, beyond the common Rate of human Nature: I answer, that without supposing them uncommonly stupid, they might be ready to argue, that when they were forbidden to worship any *Image*, or the Likeness of any Thing, &c. this related only to their worshipping the false Gods and *Idols* of other Countries, but that there was no Hurt in worshipping the true God by an Image or symbolical Representation. This is the Explication that has been actually given of the Design of the second Commandment by some of the Church of *Rome*, and those Persons of Learning and Sagacity too. And what Reason can be given why the *Israelites* might not understand it so, and think it a sufficient Justification or Excuse, that it was not the worshipping a false God they intended, but the worshipping the true God under that *Symbol*? And, at that Rate, it was not owing to an Excess of Stupidity, but to their *subtly* explaining away the true Design of this Commandment in Favour of their own Prejudices, and according to a Way of Thinking which then generally prevailed. And as to the particular Symbol they chose, that of an *Ox*, several symbolical Reasons might be given for it, according to the Wisdom that then obtained. But there is no Proof that the *Egyptian Apis* or *Serapis* were so ancient; and the Rites the *Israelites* made use of on this Occasion, *viz.* the sacrificing of Oxen, was no Way agreeable to the Rites made use of by the *Egyptians* in Honour of that Idol*.

Our Author, after having made this extraordinary Attempt to account for the Miracles of *Moses*, next proceeds to blame me for supposing a Thing that

* See Dr. Tennison, of Idolatry, Chap. 6. Part 3, 4.

cannot be proved; and that is, that *this Account was written by Moses himself, and was as firmly believed then as it was in after Ages*, p. 68. I observed, in my former Book, that we have as full a Proof of this as can reasonably be desired, or as we can have, that any Book was written by any Author under whose Name it goes. For we have the constant *Testimony* of the whole Nation to whom these Laws were given, and who regarded them with great Veneration, as the Rule of their Polity. And all *other Nations*, that had Occasion to mention them, still ascribed these Writings to *Moses*. None, either Friends or Enemies, among those who lived nearest those Times, ever pretended to deny it. There is a constant Reference to these Books as written by *Moses*, in all the succeeding Records and Monuments of their Nation; and finally, which ought to have a mighty Influence upon us Christians, they are all along ascribed to *Moses* in the *New Testament*, by our Saviour and his Apostles. Nor was this ever pretended to be contested, but by a few in these later Times, who come too late, and whose Objections are too weak and trifling, to disturb an uninterrupted Possession of so many Ages.

But he urges; *that it does not appear that Moses writ any Thing himself, but the original Book of the Law, which was to be kept with the Ark; and never to be read by any but the Priest who was to officiate*, p. 69. Here then we have this Writer's own Concession, that *Moses* himself writ the original Book of the *Law*, which was deposited in the Side of the Ark. And this certainly was a very wise Provision, by Virtue of which there was always an authentick Original kept safe in the most sacred Place, to which Recourse might be had, and by which all other Copies of the Law might be adjusted and corrected. But it certainly never was the

Design of *Moses*, as this Writer seems here to insinuate, that there should be no Copy taken of the Law at all besides the original one, and that it was to be kept wholly in the Hands of the *Priest*. It was expressly appointed by *Moses*, that the *King* should write a Copy with his own Hand, which, for the greater Correctness, was to be taken from the authentick Original; and he was to read therein all the Days of his Life, Deut. xviii. 18, 19. And it is certain, that *Moses* urged it in the strongest Manner upon all the People as their indispensable Duty, to meditate on the Law themselves, and to teach it diligently to their Children, and to make it the daily Subject of their Thoughts and Conversation, Deut. iv. 9---6. vi.---9. xi. 19. which evidently supposed, that the Law was not to be confined in the Hands of the Priests and Governors, but that all the People were to be acquainted with it. One Design of instituting the *Sabbath* was to give the People Leisure for this. And one whole Tribe, that of *Levi*, was set apart to assist the People in the Knowledge of that Law, and was for that Purpose dispersed thro' all their Tribes, *Levit. x. 2. Deut. xxxiii. 10.* It was looked upon as the proper Character of a good Man, who was entitled to the Divine Blessing, that *his Delight* was in the Law of the Lord, and in that Law did he meditate Day and Night, Psalm i. 1, 2. With regard to *Moses* himself, we are expressly told, *Deut. xxxi. 9.* that he wrote this Law, and delivered it unto the Priests, the Sons of *Levi*, which bear the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, and unto all the Elders of *Israel*. From which Words the Jews very reasonably conclude, that as he delivered an original Copy, written with his own Hand, to the Priests, to be deposited in the Sides of the Ark, of which we have an Account, ver. 24, 25. so he at the same Time delivered written Copies of the Law to

the *Elders* of the several *Tribes*, to be by them carefully preserved.

If the Question be what we are to understand by the Book of the Law which *Moses* writ and delivered; I think, it may be reasonably concluded, that if he gave them the Law at all, he gave them the Whole of that Law, since they were strictly enjoined to observe *all Things* that were there prescribed, and neither to *add* to it, nor *diminish* from it. And consequently the Law he gave them in Writing to be preserved, could not be merely the Book of *Deuteronomy*, as some have imagined; because tho' this contains a Recapitulation of the principal Laws, and extraordinary miraculous Facts, for the Truth of which he appeals to the whole Body of the People who had been Eye and Ear-Witnesses, yet there are several Laws and Directions, which they were carefully to observe, which yet are not to be found there, but in the Book of *Leviticus*, and of *Numbers*.

And if *Moses* himself committed his *Laws* to Writing, he also writ an Account of the extraordinary *Facts* whereby those Laws were attested, since this was as necessary as the other; and, indeed, the Law of *Moses* is a perpetual Intermixture of Laws and Facts. They are so interwoven, that in the one there is a perpetual Reference to the other; and they cannot be separated. Those Facts contained the Proofs of the Divine Original of the Law; many of the Laws themselves were designed and intended on Purpose to keep up the Remembrance of those Facts; and *Moses* himself frequently inculcates it upon the People to consider those Facts, and to teach them to their Children. And accordingly the Knowledge of the Laws and Facts went still together; and was alike preserved among that People throughout their Generations, *Psalms* lxxviii. 5, 6, 7. and constantly referred to in all

their Monuments as Things universally known and acknowledged among them. We are expressly told, *Numb. xxxiii. 1, 2. That Moses, by the Command of God, wrote down the Journeyings of the Children of Israel, which went forth out of the Land of Egypt, under the Hand of Moses and Aaron.* And if he was ordered to write an Account of their Journeyings out of *Egypt*, and in the Wilderness, much more of the wonderful Things that befel them, that the Remembrance of those Things might be preserved throughout all their Generations. And as the Law was that for the Illustration and Confirmation of which all the rest was written, the Whole might well be called the *Book of the Law*. So we find the Apostle *Paul*, citing a Passage out of *Genesis*, calls it *the Law*, *Gal. iv. 21, 22.* And Reference is made to some Things, as written in the Law, that are only to be found written in the Books of *Exodus* and *Numbers* *.

Our Author has little to offer, that has any Appearance of Reason or Argument, to prove that *Moses* was not the Author of the Books under his Name. He first amuses the Reader with some general Talk about the *Alterations and Additions that the Biblical Books have undergone.* He observes, that the *Book of Nehemiah brings down the Genealogy of the High-Priests to the Time of Jaddua, who, according to Josephus, was Contemporary with Alexander the Great.* But supposing *Josephus* to have been mistaken, and that *Jaddua* was not Contemporary with *Alexander the Great*, then our Author's Reflection falls. Now this is what Sir *Isaac Newton* supposes to be the Case. The Chronology of *Josephus*, particularly with regard to the Times of the *Persian Empire*, is known to be very con-

* See *Chron. xvi. 40.* and *2 Chron. xxxi. 3.* compared with *Exod. xxix. 28. Numb. xxviii, xxix.*

fulf. He confounds *Darius Nothus*, in whose Reign *Jaddua* lived, with the laft *Darius* that was overcome by *Alexander*, and this led him to make *Jaddua* Contemporary with *Alexander* the Great, or to call the High-Priest that then lived *Jaddua* *. But even allowing our Author's own Supposition, all that would follow from it would be only this, that in the Lift of the High-Priests, *Nebem. xii. 10, &c.* the Name of a High-Priest or two was afterwards inserted by other Persons, probably the Men of the great Synagogue, who revised the sacred Books †, to make the Catalogue of the High Priests compleat, and bring it down to their own Times. But this doth not touch the Authority of that Book, nor prove that *Nebemias* was not the Author of it, which it appears, from the whole Strain of it, he manifestly was. He next observes, that *the Book of Daniel and Esther was written pretty long after the Captivity, and pretty low down in the Persian Empire.* This is not true of the Book of *Daniel*, which was written by *Daniel* himself, in the very Beginning of that Empire. The Book of *Esther* was indeed written afterwards, and no Wonder, since it contains an historical Narration of what happened lower down in the *Persian Empire.* He farther assures us, that *there are several Passages, and whole Chapters in Isaiah, that must have been written after the Babylonish Captivity; that is, many Years after Isaiah was dead.* And this he asserted with as much Confidence as if he could really prove it. The Reason he gives is pleasant enough. *They relate to the State and Circumstances of the People at that Time; that is, because they prophesy of what was to happen to the People at and after the Time of the Babylonish*

* See *Chronology of ancient Kingdoms amended, Chap. vi.*

† Concerning this, see *Prid. Connect. Part 1. at the End of Book VIII.*

Captivity, therefore they were written after that Time. All that can be gathered from this is, that in our Author's Opinion, all Prophecies are written after the Event: But this will hardly pass with others for an Argument. He next very pertinently observes, that the *Book of Psalms is a Collection of Poems and Songs, composed by several Hands, at great Distances of Time*; and that one of them, viz. the *xcth Psalm*, was composed by *Moses*. And what this is brought to prove, is hard to say. *The second Book of Samuel brings down the History above 40 Years after the Death of that Prophet, and the ten last Chapters of the first Book relate to Things that were done after the Death of Samuel*. And what follows from thence? That *Samuel* did not write the ten last Chapters of the first Book, nor any Part of the second. And who supposes that he did? According to the *Jews*, he writ the former Part of the first Book; and the Remainder of that Book, and all the second Book, were written by *Gad* and *Nathan*, the Prophets; which they gather from what is said, *1 Chron. xxix. 29*. And the Whole, when compiled together, might be called by the Name of *Samuel*, because he was the most eminent Person of the three, and his Acts were recorded in the first Place.

All this is nothing to *Moses*; but, at last, he comes to produce a Proof, that the Books of *Moses* were not written by him; and the Proof relates only to a Passage in the Book of *Genesis*, Chap. xxxvi. where we have an exact List of all the Kings and Dukes of *Edom*, before there was any King in *Israel*, which therefore was wrote when there was a King in *Israel*, and consequently could not have been earlier than the Time of *Samuel* and *Saul*, p. 69.

But if it should be granted, that to the Account *Moses* had given of *Esau* and his Posterity was afterwards added by some other Person, perhaps by *Samuel*.

Samuel; a List of the Kings of *Edom*, down to his Time, to make the Account compleat, it would not follow that, therefore, *Moses* did not write those Books, or that there is any Corruption or Alteration made in the *Laws* or *Facts*. This Insertion has nothing to do either with the *Laws*, as delivered by *Moses*, or with the Accounts of the *Facts* whereby those *Laws* were attested, both which were written by *Moses*, and kept with the utmost Veneration. Nor would any succeeding Writer presume to corrupt or change them; or if they had attempted it, must soon have been detected. And I have elsewhere shewn, that there are no Corruptions or Alterations made in those Instances, in which it might be expected that they would have altered the original Records, if they durst have corrupted them at all*. But after all, it doth not appear, that the Passage the Author refers to was inserted after the Time of *Moses*, nor can any sufficient Argument be brought to prove, that it was not written by *Moses* himself. It is indeed observed in that Passage, that the Kings there mentioned *reigned in the Land of Edom, before there reigned any King over the Children of Israel*, Gen. xxxvi. 31. From whence our Author concludes, that it must have been writ when there was a King in Israel: But this doth not necessarily follow: These Expressions may be designed barely to signify, that the Posterity of *Esau* had had so many Kings as are there mentioned before the Time in which *Moses* wrote; whereas *Israel* had had no King hitherto; tho' he knew they would have Kings in After-times; as is plain from what he saith, *Deut. xvii. 14, 19.*

But if it should be granted, that these Words suppose, that at the Time of writing this, there

* See *Answer to Christianity*, &c. Vol. II. p. 139, 140.

was a King over the Children of *Israel*, it could not be concluded from thence, that *Moses* did not write it. For he is expressly said to have been King in *Jesurun* or *Israel*, in the Blessing which he himself pronounced upon the Tribes, *Deut.* xxxiii. 5. And that he was really so, and had a regal Power, the learned *Selden* proves at large, *De Synedr.* Lib. II. Cap. 1, 2. And in this View the Design of these Expressions would only be to signify, that there were so many Kings in *Edom* before *Moses* ruled the *Israelites*, who had never been governed by a single Person before. If it be urged, that there is not Space enough for so many Kings in *Edom* before *Moses's* Time; I answer, that from *Esau's* Marriage till *Moses's* Death there were no less than 345 Years. And here there is Room enough both for the first Race of Dukes of the Children of *Esau*, mentioned *ver.* 15, 19. and who were all contemporary, and may well be reckoned within the first hundred Years after *Esau's* Marriage, and after them for the eight Kings, mentioned *ver.* 31, 39. For the Reigns of Kings, according to Sir *Isaac Newton's* Computation, may be reckoned at a Medium, one with another, at eighteen or twenty Years a-piece*; but let us reckon the Kings of *Edom* at 22 Years and a half, one with another, they will be comprehended within 180 Years; and at that Rate, there will be about 65 Years still remaining between the last of the Kings there mentioned and the Death of *Moses*; which is Space enough for the Dukes that are mentioned after the Kings, *ver.* 40. and who probably were all contemporary. And the *Edomites*, who seem to have been under the Government of Dukes, when *Israel* went out of *Egypt*, *Exod.* xv. 15. returned under the Government of Kings a little before the Death

* See his *Chronology* of ancient Kingdoms amended, Chap. 1.

of *Moses*; for we find there was a King of *Edom* at the Time when *Israel* demanded a Passage thro' their Land, which was the last Year of *Moses's* Life. There is nothing in all this but what is very consistent; and so this mighty Argument of our Author's, to prove that *Moses* was not the Author of the *Pentateuch*, falls to the Ground.

He next inveighs, p. 70, 71. against the Miracles of *Moses*, as he had done several Times before, because of the Destruction brought on the *Egyptians* and *Canaanites*: But this hath been already considered and obviated above. And after pronouncing these *Accounts of Things*, to be the most incredible *Fiction and Forgery* that ever was invented; and that it is contrary to all Reason and common Sense, to look upon those *Historians* as having been divinely inspired, he declares, that for his Part, he is sure that this miraculously stupid People were always inspired and possessed with the Spirit of the Devil. And it is both a Matter of Grief and Wonder, that they should be able thus to transfuse their Spirit and Faith into Christians, p. 72. that is, that both the *Jews*, all along, in all their Generations, and all Christians that have believed that those Accounts are true, and that the sacred *Hebrew Writers* were divinely inspired; (and it is certain, that our Saviour, and his Apostles, and the Body of Christians, have considered them in this View) have been inspired and possessed with the Spirit of the Devil. This may give us a true Specimen of the Temper of this Writer. Many will be apt to think, that in describing the Spirit of the *Jews*, he has plainly discovered his own; and that he has drawn his own Character in stronger Terms, than any of his Adversaries would have done it for him.

He farther objects against *Moses*, as guilty of Imposture, in trumping up the *Abrahamick Covenant*

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nant to the People of *Israel*, or pretending to any Right or Claim from thence; as if it was in Accomplishment of the Promise made to *Abraham*, that they were to be delivered out of *Egypt*, and brought to *Canaan*. He urges, that *this must have been without the least Ground or Foundation*; because the Covenant God made with *Abraham*, concerning his Posterity possessing the Land of *Canaan* within 400 Years, was conditional: And the Terms of that Covenant had never been complied with, and all Right and Claim from it had been forfeited long before the Days of *Moses*: Which he proves, because they had run into all the Idolatry and Superstition of *Egypt*, &c. p. 72. But it doth not appear, that their possessing the Land of *Canaan* was suspended on the Condition of their persisting without any Interruption in the pure Profession and Practice of the true Religion; so that any Failure in their Obedience was an entire Forfeiture of their Right and Interest in that Covenant; and that even tho' they should afterwards repent and return, they were to have no Benefit by it. Besides, the Passage the Author refers to, *Gen. xv. 13-16*, contains not merely a conditional Promise, but a plain and absolute Prediction of what should certainly come to pass. It is there expressly declared and foretold to *Abraham*, that his Seed should be Strangers in a Land that was not theirs, and should serve another Nation, and be in an afflicted State; and that at the End of 400 Years, they should come out with great Substancer, and come to the Land of *Canaan*. *Moses* might therefore justly put the *Israelites* in Mind of the Promise made to *Abraham*, since the Time prefixed for the Accomplishment of it was now come. It was indeed proper, in order to their having the Benefit of it, that they should solemnly engage to take the Lord for their God, and walk in Obedience to his Laws.

Laws. And this they did engage to do ; and upon their frequent Rebellions and Revoltings that Generation fell in the Wilderness ; and their Children, who were not involved in their Corruptions and Idolatries, had the Benefit of it.

But he farther urges, *p. 73.* that the *Plan which Moses laid, or the Method which he had concerted, to make himself Master of the Country, was absolutely inconsistent with the Nature and Conditions of the Abrahamick Covenant.* How is this proved ? It should have been by *converting the Canaanites*, and not in a Way of Bloodshed and Violence. But all that was promised in the Covenant made with *Abraham*, was, that his *Seed* should have the Land of *Canaan* for a Possession. The particular Manner, in which they were to be put in Possession of it, is not told. But the Reason of their not being to possess that Land, till after 400 Years, is declared to be this, that the *Iniquities of the Amorites were not yet full*, *Gen. xv. 16.* This plainly implies, that when their Wickedness should be arrived to the greatest Height, then, and not till then, should that Promise of putting the *Israelites* in Possession of that Land be accomplished. And, consequently, it is plainly intimated, that it was to be done by dispossessing the *Canaanites* in a Way of exemplary Vengeance upon them for their Crimes ; which this Writer, who presumes to direct Divine Providence, in the Way of dealing with guilty Nations, calls *unnatural Cruelty, Violence and Outrages.* But, it seems, *Abraham* might easily have possessed himself of the Country by Force of Arms, if he had thought this a just and proper Method ; and so might *Joseph* have done after him, when he was *Prime Minister in Egypt*, *p. 73. 74.* But since *Abraham* was assured, that his *Seed* should be Strangers and afflicted in a foreign Land, and not possess the Land of

of *Canaan* till after 400 Years, it may be presumed, that he was willing to wait the appointed Time; and to have attempted it before, would have been no Way suitable to *Abraham's* Character, or to the Faith for which he was so renowned. And the same may be said with Regard to *Joseph*, who made no Doubt of the Accomplishment of that Promise, as appears from *Gen. l. 24, 25.* but knew that the Time for it was not yet come.

Our Author, after some farther Invectives against *Moses* and the *Israelites*, for invading the *Canaanites*, and for *plundering and destroying the* Midianites, who were punished in an exemplary Manner by the Divine Command, for enticing the *Israelites* to Idolatry and Vice; would fain offer something for vindicating his little Sneer concerning *Judah's* not being able to drive out the Inhabitants of the Vallies who had Chariots of Iron, *because the Lord never enabled the Israelites as Infantry to stand before the Canaanites Horse.* He represents the Answer I had given to this in his own Way; but as he is pleased wisely to pass over the exprefs Proofs I had brought, to shew the Falshood of the Reason he had assigned *, I need not take any farther Notice of it.

He had, in his former Book, insinuated, as if the *Promise* made to *Abraham*, concerning the *Israelites* coming to *Canaan* in 400 Years, was not accomplished, because they were not immediately at their first Entrance into the Land of *Canaan* put in Possession of the whole Country at its full Extent. To which it was answered, that it is no where absolutely promised, that they should be immediately put into Possession of the whole Land at once. The Time of 400 Years was fixed for their coming again to the Land of *Canaan*,

* See Divine Authority, p. 78, 79.

Gen. xv. 16. but no Time is fixed for their being put into entire Possession of the whole Country. And I observed, that it is most expressly again and again declared and foretold, that God would not drive out the *Canaanites* from before them *all at once*, but *by little and little*. To which this Author answers, that God *had never declared this*, till *Moses himself had found*, and was convinced by Experience, that they could not be driven out altogether, and that the *Israelites had not Strength enough*, p. 75, 76. But it happens unluckily for him, that this was declared soon after the *Israelites* came to *Sinai*, a considerable Time before the Spies were sent to explore the Land, and before it could be pretended, that the *Israelites* had any Experience of the Strength of the *Canaanites*, see *Exod. xxiii. 29--31*. But, however, "he is sure, that the Reason which the Historian gives for this, could not be God's Reason, that he would not drive them out altogether, lest the Land should become desolate, and the Beasts of the Field should multiply against them." He thinks the People must have amounted to *between three and four Millions of Men, Women and Children*; and it is wonderful, that they should not be sufficient to stock and inhabit a Country, not a fourth Part so big as *England*, as this Country was not in its full Extent, had they conquered it all. And yet a Land thus stocked with Inhabitants must have been more populous than *England, Holland, or any other Part of Europe*, at this Day, p. 75. But it happens, that in this Passage, where those Words are to be found which the Author here refers to, the Land assigned to the *Israelites*, and which was to be delivered into their Hands, was of a vastly larger Extent than all *England*; for it is represented as reaching from the *Red Sea* even unto the Sea of the *Philistines*, and from the Desert unto the River, viz. *Euphrates*; all this was comprehended

hended in the Grant *, tho' not fully possessed till the Time of *David* and *Solomon*. And with regard to the Land of *Canaan*, properly so called, it must be considered that it was a *hilly* Country; and such a Country has much more Room in it than a plain Country of the same Extent. And, in fact, we find that great Numbers of the *Canaanites* continued to inhabit many Parts of the Land for a considerable Time after the first Entrance of the *Israelites* into it. And since they and the *Canaanites* together did no more than fill the Land, if the *Canaanites* had been utterly destroyed at once, some Parts of it might have been left desolate, and the Beasts might have been multiplied upon them; especially considering that this Land was surrounded with great Defarts and Wilderesses, as well as full of Hills and Mountains. And, accordingly, long after this, when the People of *Israel* were much more in Number than they were at their first Entrance into the Land of *Canaan*, that Country was frequently infested with wild Beasts, as may be gathered from several Instances.

* See *Dent.* xi. 22, 23, 24. *Jos.* i. 3, 4, 5:



CHAP.

C H A P. V.

The Testimony given by St. Paul to the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testament vindicated against the Author's Exceptions. The Apostle recommended those sacred Writings as of Divine Authority to the Churches which he founded among the Gentiles. He regarded the Law of Moses as having been originally of Divine Institution, tho' he knew by Revelation it was no longer to be in Force under the Gospel. Objections against this obviated. The typical Reference of that Law vindicated. His Attempt to prove that St. Paul was not the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, considered.

THE Author, in his former Book, had undertaken to shew, that the Law of Moses was not originally a Divine Institution or Revelation from God, to be afterwards abolished and set aside by another Revelation, but was a mere Piece of carnal worldly Policy. And what was more extraordinary, he declared, that if he could not make it appear that St. Paul was on his Side, he would give up the Argument. In Opposition to this I shewed, by the most exprefs Testimonies, that the Apostle Paul did look upon the Law of Moses to have been originally a Divine Institution or Revelation from God. One Passage I produced to that Purpose was that remarkable one to Timothy

thy, where he commends him, for that from a Child he had known the Holy Scriptures, and declares, that they were able to make him wise unto Salvation. And then adds, that all Scripture (or the whole Scripture) is given by Inspiration of God, &c. I observed, that by the *Holy Scriptures* he incontestably refers to the Writings of the *Old Testament*, viz. those of *Moses* and the *Prophets*. Now what does our Author say to this? Can he deny that the Scriptures there referred to are the Writings of *Moses* and the *Prophets*? He cannot deny this. But he would have it, that by all Scripture the Apostle only means the *moral Precepts* of Scripture, p. 79. And at this Rate any Writing in the World, that has any good moral Precepts in it, tho' mixed with many Things that are false and of a pernicious Tendency, and containing a *Scheme of Superstition and Enthusiasm*, contrary to all Reason and common Sense, falsely set up under the popular Pretence of a *Divine Institution or Revelation from God*, which is the Idea he is pleased to give us of the *Old Testament* Writings, may be safely recommended, and pronounced to be *Divine*, and given by *Inspiration* from God. But whether this be consistent with common Honesty, may be left to the Judgment of every Reader. And, I am persuaded, that even this Writer himself, tho' none of the most scrupulous, yet in the Notions he now hath of the *Jewish* Scriptures, would not recommend them to Mankind under that general Character, which he here pretends the Apostle gave of them, who, he would make us believe, had the same Notions of them with himself: And yet he confidently puts it upon his Reader, that *St. Paul's Principles and Practice are perfectly consistent in his Scheme*, and that he cannot be charged with any thing of Artifice or Prevarication, p. 92.

But

But he urges, that when the Apostle *Paul* here talks of the *Holy Scriptures*, and recommends them as written by *Inspiration* of God, he could not understand it of the whole Scripture in gross, or of every *Thing that the Jews had received as authentick Scripture*; because this would be to make him assert a *Thing contrary to all Truth, Sense, and Reason*, p. 80. All that I can make of the Argument is this, that because this *Author* looks upon it to be absurd to hold all the Scripture to be divinely inspired, therefore the Apostle *Paul* did not, and could not hold it to be divinely inspired, tho' he plainly represents it in that View. But it is urged, that he could not mean the *bare historical Parts of Scripture*, nor could he mean that Part of those Writings which relates to the *Ordinances of the ceremonial Law*, which this Apostle every where condemns and explodes. As to the *ceremonial Law*, it has been shewn, that St. *Paul* all along supposes and asserts it to have been originally of Divine Institution, designed to be preparatory to the Gospel, and subservient to it*. Nor hath this Writer been able to answer the clear Proofs that were brought for that. And, indeed, it would be a strange Thing to suppose, that when the Apostle gives this noble Character of the Scriptures in general, he should have no Regard to the Writings of *Moses*, which made so eminent a Part of those Scriptures. As to the *historical Parts of Scripture*, tho' this Writer seems to think it absurd to suppose that they could be profitable for *Correction or Instruction in Righteousness*, &c. yet, it is certain, the Apostle *Paul* did not think so. He represents the *historical Parts of Scripture* as written for our *Admonition*, and for our *Learning*, see 1 Cor. x. 11. compared with Rom. xv. 4. And he fre-

* See *Divine Authority*, p. 82, 83, 90---98.

quently refers to the historical Books of the *Old Testament*, under the Notion of *Scripture*. Thus we find him referring to some historical Passages in the Book of *Genesis*, Rom. iv. 3. Gal. iii. 8. iv. 30. And to an historical Passage in the Book of *Exodus*, Rom. ix. 16. And to another in the first Book of *Kings*, Rom. xi. 2, 3, 4. All these he evidently cites and refers to as *Scripture*, and as of Divine Authority *.

But our Author urges, that the *historical Writings*, which the *Jews* received as authentick *Scripture*, *abound with many Mistakes and Inconsistencies in History and Chronology*. This is the Notion he has of them: But the Question is, whether this was also the Notion the Apostle *Paul* entertained of them. And, I am persuaded, if this had been the Case, he would not have given so glorious a Character of the Holy Scriptures in general with-

* It is evident to any one that impartially reads the historical Writings of the *Old Testament*, that the main Design of them is not merely to gratify a Curiosity, but to beget and maintain in the Minds of the People a Veneration for the supreme Being, a Detestation of Vice and Idolatry, a Dread of his Justice, and a thankful Sense of his great Goodness, by letting them know how they and their Rulers prospered, when they adhered to the Worship of God, and the Practice of Righteousness; and, on the contrary, what Calamities befel them, when they fell into Idolatry and Wickedness. These are the important Lessons which the sacred historical Writings are designed to convey to Posterity. All Things there are made subservient to the great Ends of Religion: And in this they are gloriously distinguished from all other historical Writings. This Author, indeed, represents the Hebrew Historians as every where discovering a visible and strong Prejudice and Prepossession in Favour of their own Nation, p. 28. But the contrary is evident. If the wonderful Actings of Divine Providence for them are recorded, so also are the ungrateful Returns they frequently made to the Divine Goodness. The Follies, the Idolatries and Revolts of their own People, and the Faults even of their greatest and most admired good Men and Heroes, are related without any Arts of Palliation or Disguise, with a Fairness, a Simplicity and Impartiality that cannot be sufficiently admired.

out Distinction, as he does, in this Passage, and which must necessarily have been understood by *Timothy*, and all others in that Age, as relating to the sacred Writings of the *Old Testament* in general. I am very little concerned about the Author's Charge of Inconsistencies; when he produces them, they may be considered. Tho' if it should be admitted, that some Mistakes, with Regard to *Names, numeral Letters, Computations* of Years, and other Matters of small Consequence, have, in Process of Time, crept into those original Writings, thro' the Mistake or Negligence of Transcribers, it would not destroy the Authority of those Writings, or shew that the original Authors of them were not divinely inspired.

He next goes into a Digression, *p. 80, 81.* concerning *Inspiration*, the Design of which is to shew, that no more Regard is to be had to what comes by extraordinary Inspiration, or is confirmed by Miracles, than if it had come only in the ordinary Way. What he offers here to this Purpose hath been already considered; see above, *p. 88.* and *p. 123, 124, &c.* At present I shall only observe, that whatever this Writer's Way of Thinking may be, which is of little Importance to the World, he should not pretend to put this upon us as the Apostle *Paul's* Sentiment; as if it was his Opinion too, that Divine Inspiration is of no Authority at all, and no more to be depended on than if there had been no Inspiration; and as if by saying, that the Scriptures are given by *Inspiration of God*, he intended that they are no more to be regarded than any common Writings that do not pretend to be written by Inspiration at all. But it is urged, that "under that extraordinary Dispensation of the Spirit, Men were not to receive and believe every Spirit, or every Matter of Inspiration, but to try the Spirits, or Doctrines of

“ Inspiration, whether they were of God, or not.” But does it follow, that they were to have no Regard to *true* Inspiration, because they were to take care not to be deceived or imposed upon by *falsely* pretended Ones? When Christians are commanded in the *New Testament* to *try the Spirits*, it is evident that this is not designed to derogate from the Authority of the Scriptures, since one *Test*, by which they were to try them, was their agreeing with the Holy Scriptures. So the *Bereans* tried the Doctrine of the Apostles by the Scriptures, and are commended for it, *Acts* xvii. 11, 12. And another Test, whereby they were to try the Spirits in that first Age, was their agreeing with the Doctrine of *Christ* and his *Apostles*. Hence they are commanded to *mark* those which taught *Things contrary to the Doctrines which they had learned, and to avoid them*, *Rom.* xvi. 17. And St. Paul earnestly exhorts the *Galatians* not to receive any Doctrine different from what he had taught them. And why were they so firmly to adhere to the Gospel he had taught them? Because it was what he himself had *received by Revelation from Jesus Christ*, *Gal.* i. 8, 9, 11, 12. And which was confirmed by the most illustrious Attestations and *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, *Chap.* iii. 2, 5.

This Writer next takes Notice of a Passage, produced by me, from *Rom.* iii. 1, 2. where St. Paul calls the Writings of the *Old Testament*, of which the Law of *Moses* was a principal Part, the *Oracles of God*: And they are expressly called so by St. Stephen, *Acts* vii. 38. He has nothing to say to this, but the old Story over again, that the Apostle could not mean the Law of *Moses*, because he calls its Ordinances, *carnal Ordinances, beggarly Elements, &c.* And this he frequently repeats in this Book, tho’ he knows I had proved fully and distinctly, that the Apostle did not, and could not,

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in Consistency with himself, intend by those Expressions to signify that the Law of *Moses* was not originally of Divine Institution. Yea, and that he supposes and asserts the contrary, in those very Places where he makes Use of that Manner of Expression. He has not thought fit to offer the least Answer to the Proofs that were brought for this *; and yet repeats what he had said before as securely, as if no Notice had been taken of it at all. His following loose Harangue, about *Evils* coming from God, as well as Good, &c. hath been already considered in the marginal Note, p. 82, 83. to which I refer the Reader.

In p. 83, 84. he charges me as *discovering a great deal of Artifice and Prevarication, but nothing at all of Truth and Reason*; because I say, that "it cannot be denied, that St. Paul, in all his Epistles, cites the Mosaical and Prophetick Writings as of Divine Authority, and that he delivered those Writings to all the Churches of the *Gentiles* among whom he preached, and whom he instructed in the Christian Religion, under the Notion of Scripture, or *divinely inspired Writings*." He says, that "the Apostle always argues from the Authority of *Moses*, and the Prophets against the *Jews*, but that he never so much as quotes them but to the *Jews*, where he found them dispersed among the *Gentiles*, and that the *Jewish* or *Judaizing* Teachers had been tampering with the *Gentiles* before, and had furnished them with those Writings." Now the contrary to what this Writer here so confidently affirms, may be proved with great Evidence. And it might seem a trifling Thing to attempt to prove a Thing so well known, if this Author's denying it did not make it necessary.

* See *Divine Authority*, p. 90--98.

The Epistle to the *Romans* was principally directed to the *Gentiles*, see *Chap. i. 13.* And it appears that there were many among them that well understood their Christian *Liberty*, and whom he thought it necessary to urge not to despise the *Jewish* Converts, *Chap. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 5, 15.* And yet he cites the Scriptures all along as of Divine Authority, not merely in those Parts where he is disputing with the *Jews*, but where he is applying to the *Gentiles*, *Chap. xiv, xv.* And in the Conclusion of that Epistle, speaking of the *Gospel-Mystery* which was then made manifest, he saith, that by the *Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the Commandment of the everlasting God, it was made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith*, *Chap. xvi. 26.* I do not think there can be a clearer Proof of what this Writer with so much Confidence denies, that the Scriptures of the *Old Testament* were recommended by the Apostle to the *Gentiles*, and represented by him as of Divine Authority. In his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, who were a Church consisting of *Gentile* Converts, and whom he addresses to, and considers entirely as such, *Eph. ii. 1, 2, 11, 12.* he declares to them, that they were *built on the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner Stone*, ver. 20. See also *Eph. iv. 8, vi. 2.* The *Corinthians* were a Church gathered from the *Gentiles*, and from his first Epistle to them it appears that they understood their Christian Liberty, and were rather in Danger of carrying it to an Excess, than the contrary. Nor is there any Thing at all in that Epistle relating to the Controversy of those Times between the *Judaizing Teachers* and the Apostle *Paul*; and yet he frequently, on all Occasions, cites the *Old Testament* Writings to them as Scripture, and as of Divine Authority, see *1 Cor. ii. 9, ix. 8, 9, 10. x. 11.*

xiv. 21. See also in his second Epistle, 2 *Cor.* iv. 13. vi. 2, 16, 17, 18. vii. 1. viii. 15. ix. 9. And even to *Timothy* his Fellow-Labourer, and whom this Writer supposes to have been of the same Sentiments with himself, he all along quotes the Scriptures as of Divine Authority, 1 *Tim.* v. 18. 2 *Tim.* iii. 14---18. And where he exhorts him to *continue in the Things he had learned, and been assured of*, he recommends the *Holy Scriptures* to him as *able to make us wise unto Salvation*, as given by *Inspiration of God*, and as fitted to make the *Man of God perfect*, i. e. one that was fit to instruct others in Religion. And now can it possibly be thought that this great Apostle would have acted at this Rate, if he had not looked upon the Writings of the *Old Testament* to be divinely inspired, but written by Persons *falsely* pretending to Inspiration, and containing many Things that were false and superstitious, and only dispersed among the *Gentiles* by the *Jewish Teachers*, his Adversaries? Would not a Man of his *Sincerity* and *Zeal* have faithfully warned the Churches among whom he preached, not to be deceived or imposed upon by such Pretences, which according to this Writer's Representation tended to lead them so wrong in Religion? Would not he at least have said, it in Confidence to *Timothy* when he was near his own Death, and have instructed him to let others know it? But since the contrary to all this is manifest, that he every where in his Epistle to the *Gentile Churches*, and in those he writ to *Timothy*, especially his last, written a little before his own Death, represents the Scriptures of the *Old Testament* as of Divine Authority, and refers to them on all Occasions as such; it is but reasonable to conclude, supposing him to be a Man of common *Honesty*, that he himself believed them to be so, and intended to recommend them to those Churches among whom he preached

as such. To which it may be added, that it is evident in Fact, as appears from the eldest Monuments of those Times still extant, that the Churches which the Apostle *Paul* planted among the *Gentiles*, and who looked upon themselves as freed from the Obligation of the Mosaick Law and Ordinances, did receive the Scriptures of the *Old Testament* as of Divine Authority, and did read them as well as the Writings of the Apostles in their publick Assemblies, and that they have continued to be owned as such by the general Consent of the Christian *Gentile* Church unto this Day.

In p. 84, 85. He reflects upon a Passage in which I had said, that “the Apostle *Paul* insisted upon it, that he had received an *immediate Revelation from God*, concerning the abrogating the ceremonial Law, as our Author himself acknowledges.” Upon which he saith, “This is another mere Fiction and Forgery, for never did St. *Paul* nor I assert any such Thing: And therefore all the Author’s Rant upon it afterwards can only serve to shew the Candor and Justice of such spiritual systematical Scholasticks.” And p. 87. he saith, That “I most unrighteously urge his Concession for the Abrogation of the ceremonial Law by an *immediate Revelation to St. Paul*.” And then he goes on to observe, That “this Law could not be abrogated or repealed with regard to the *Gentiles*, who had never been bound by it; and as to its continued Obligation to the Christian *Jews*, it never came into the Question.”

When I first read this Reflection of the Author’s, I imagined, that in the Citation I had made from his Book, I had by Mistake put in the Word *immediate*, and added it to *Revelation*; for tho’ this would not have altered the Sense, yet it would have been enough to have given him Occasion to raise

raise mighty Clamours upon it. But, notwithstanding all his Confidence, I did not think him, or any other Writer, capable of bringing in such a direct and strong Charge, where there was not the least Foundation or Pretence for it. But now I find there is nothing so unfair, or so contrary to evident Truth or Fact, which this Writer will not venture to assert, if he thinks it may but expose his Adversary. The Reader will not think this too severe, when he reads the following Paragraph quoted out of his first Book, and to which I had referred. He there tells us, That "the great concerning Debate of that Time was reduced to these two Questions; *First, Whether the Jewish Converts were still obliged, in Point of Religion and Conscience, to obey the whole Law?* And, *Secondly, Whether the Gentile Converts, as a Matter of Religion and Conscience, were bound to comply with the Mosaick Law of Profelytism, as the necessary Condition upon which the Christian Jews were to hold Communion with them?* In both these Points, the Apostles, Elders and Brethren at *Jerusalem*, in Consequence of their Decree, stood to the Affirmative, while *Paul* as stiffly maintained the *Negative* against them, declaring that he had received this not from Man, or by any intermediate Conveyance, but by immediate Revelation." And after having observed, that this Controversy at length rose so high, that the rest of the Apostles thought themselves obliged to separate from *St. Paul*; he again repeats it, that *St. Paul* still insisted upon immediate Revelation for this, *Mor. Phil. Vol. I. p. 78, 79.*

Here it is as evident as Words can make it, that he himself makes one of the Questions which he supposes to have been debated between *St. Paul* and the other Apostles to relate to the continued Obligation

tion of the Law upon the *Jewish Converts*, tho' in his present Book he saith, that this *never came into the Question*. And that he makes *St. Paul* to maintain, that even the *Jewish Converts were not obliged, in Point of Religion and Conscience, to obey the whole Law, in Opposition to the other Apostles* who maintained that they were thus obliged. And that the Apostle pleaded, that he had received *this by immediate Revelation from God*. And before this he had declared, That "*St. Paul* " in all the *Jewish Synagogues* where he had " preached, in *Greece and Asia Minor*, had taught " and maintained, that the *Law was abrogated* " and done away by the Death and Resurrection " of Christ; that in Christ, or under the Gospel- " Dispensation, there could be no *Difference or* " *Distinction between Jew or Gentile*. See *Mor. Phil.* Vol. I. p. 67." And in p. 52. he had represented it " as a *Matter of Fact, too plain to* " *be doubted of or deny'd*, that *St. Paul* in his " preaching to the *Gentiles*, and to the *Dispersed* " among the *Jews*, throughout all the Parts of the " *Roman Empire*, had *set aside the Obligation of* " the *Jewish ceremonial Law*, and declared it " *abolished and done away* by the Death and Sacrifice of Christ." He has this over again, p. 57, 59. And that this was *clearly St. Paul's Opinion, and a new Doctrine of his own*, *ibid.* And expressly saith, that all the Apostles, *Barnabas, &c.* fell off from *St. Paul*, *because they could not agree to absolve the Jewish Converts from their Obedience to the Law, as the Law of God, or as a Matter of Religion and Conscience*, p. 72. And that, therefore, as he expresses it, p. 79. they left him to preach *his own Gospel*, as he called it, in his own Way. And then adds, that *St. Paul insisted upon immediate Revelation for this*; that is, for this among other Things, that the *Jewish Converts* were

were not still obliged, in Point of Religion and Conscience, to obey the Law: Or, in other Words, that the Law was *abrogated* and *done away* in Christ, even with regard to the *Jewish* Converts. And yet he has the Confidence now to charge me with *Fiction*, *Forgery*, and *Unrighteousness*, as if I had abused and misrepresented him in the highest Degree, for saying, that he himself acknowledged, in his former Book, that St. Paul insisted upon it, that he had received an *immediate Revelation* from God, concerning the abrogating the ceremonial Law. And, in most express Contradiction to what he himself had asserted in his former Book, he now affirms, that St. Paul pretended to no Revelation from God, as abrogating the ceremonial Law, with regard to the Jews, p. 87. I leave it to the Reader to make what Reflections he thinks fit upon this Conduct.

He has a long confused Ramble, p. 85---92. The Design of which is to shew, that St. Paul could not look upon the Law of *Moses* as a Thing which had been originally instituted by God, but which he knew by Revelation was now abrogated. But he offers little on this Head but what he had alledged before, and which was fully confuted. It was proved, in the Book which he has attempted to answer, by plain and express Testimonies from the Apostle *Paul* himself, who best understood his own Sense, that he did look upon the Law of *Moses* to have been originally of Divine Institution; and that even where he argues against its being now obligatory, yet he grants and asserts this Law to have been originally given by God himself, and that for wise Purposes. It was also shewn, that he plainly declares, that this Law is now abrogated; that whereas we were formerly kept under the Law till the Faith should be revealed, and the promised Seed should come, as a Child in his State of Non-Age

Age is kept under the Discipline of *Tutors* and *Governors*, we are now freed from that Yoke; whereas it was as a *Schoolmaster* to lead us unto *Christ*, we are now no longer under that *Schoolmaster*; that *Christ* hath broken down the middle *Wall of Partition*, that is, the ceremonial Law, which was a *Partition-Wall* between *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and that he abolished the *Enmity*, even the *Law of Commandments*, consisting in *Ordinances*: That he hath blotted out the *Hand-writing of Ordinances*, and hath taken it away, nailing it to his *Cross*: And that now in *Christ Jesus* there is neither *Jew* nor *Greek*, but all are one in *Christ Jesus* *. I question whether any Words could be more expresse to shew, that the *Law of Moses* is now no longer in Force; and that the *Obligation* of it is taken away thro' *Jesus Christ*. This was evidently Part of the Gospel the Apostle *Paul* preached in Opposition to the *Judaizing Teachers*; and he expressly declares, that he had the Gospel which he preached, *not of Man, nor by Man, but by Revelation of Jesus Christ*; which is as plain a Description of his having had it by *immediate Revelation*, as any Words can be. From whence it clearly follows, that he had it by *Revelation* from *Jesus Christ*, that the *Law of Moses* was now abolished, and no longer obligatory in Point of Religion and Conscience. But our Author urges against this, that “ if there had been any *Revelation* at all about abrogating the ceremonial Law, “ *Peter* and the other Apostles and Teachers of “ the Circumcision must doubtless have known it, “ and it must have been first revealed to them, as “ being more immediately concerned in it; and “ that if *St. Paul* had urged any such *Revelation*, “ it must have been rejected by them as a false

* See *Rom.* vi. 14. *Gal.* iii. 25, 28. *iv.* 5. *Eph.* ii. 14, 15. *Col.* ii. 14. *iii.* 11.

" Pretension and an Imposture, as God had reveal-
 " ed no such Matter to any of them, *p.* 85, 87,
 " 89." And he has it over again, *p.* 98. But
 if it should be granted, that *St. Paul* had a Reve-
 lation relating to this Matter before it was revealed
 to any other of the Apostles, or that it was more
 clearly and fully revealed to him than it was to any
 of the rest, and that he was more expressly appointed
 and commissioned to declare it, it would not follow,
 either that it was not a true Revelation from God to
St. Paul, or that the other Apostles would not or
 could not acknowledge it as such. The Apostle
Peter had a Revelation relating to his preaching the
 Gospel to the *Gentiles*, and taking them into the
 Christian Church, without putting a Difference be-
 tween them and the *Jews*, before the other Apostles
 had it; but they did not for this reject it, but when
 they found he had such a Revelation, acquiesced in
 it with Joy. And it was evidently proved in my
 former Book, that the other Apostle did not deny
 the Revelation which *St. Paul* professed to have re-
 ceived from Christ, but approved the Doctrines he
 preached, and acknowledged his Divine Mission.
 If this Writer could prove that the other Apostles
 had, or pretended to have a contrary Revelation, and
 that in Opposition to *St. Paul* they urged it upon
 the *Jewish* Converts as a Duty to observe the cere-
 monial Law as still necessary in Point of Religion
 and Conscience, this would be something to his
 Purpose: And this he had asserted in his former
 Book. But in Answer to him it was shewn, that
 there was an entire Harmony between *St. Paul* and
 the other Apostles on that Head: That it doth not
 appear, by any one Passage in the whole *New Te-*
stament, that any of the Apostles ever once exhort-
 ed their Christian Converts to adhere to the Law of
Moses, and the Rites there prescribed, as still obli-
 gatory under the Gospel: That the Doctrines they
 preached,

preached, as well as the Apostle *Paul*, tended to prepare the *Jewish* Converts for an entire Abrogation of the Law: And that it appears, from their whole Conduct, that neither *St. Paul* nor the other Apostles looked upon the Law of *Moses* as properly obligatory under the Gospel in Point of Conscience, and as necessary to our Justification and Acceptance with God; tho' both he and they looked upon it to be still lawful to observe the *Mosaic* Rites in Compliance with weak Consciences. This, indeed, is what this Writer cannot comprehend. He thinks it is evident, that if *St. Paul* or the other Apostles had known by Revelation, that the Law was abrogated or abolished by *Jesus Christ*, they could not have complied with it, or observed it at all in *Religion, Reason, or Conscience*; which yet we find they did. He triumphs in this, as if it were perfect *Demonstration*, and has it over and over, as if he were never weary of repeating it*. But the Whole of what he says on this Head proceeds upon a palpable Mistake, as if because that Law was no longer obligatory as before, so as to bind the Consciences of Men to the Observance of it as *necessary* by a Divine Command, therefore the Observation of it became immediately and absolutely *unlawful*: But this doth not follow. Two Things were observed, that fully account for the Consistency of the Conduct of *St. Paul* and the other Apostles in this Matter. The one is, that they knew it was the Will of God, that the Law of *Moses*, with its peculiar Rites, should be no longer strictly *obligatory* in Point of Conscience on the Disciples of *Jesus*; and that *Christ*, by his Coming, and by his Death, had really superceded that Law, and set them free from the Obligation of its ceremonial Rites and Ordinances; and had

* See p. 85, 88, 89, 94, 98, 100, 101.

taken away the Distinction between *Jews* and *Gentiles*. The other is, that they also knew that it was the Will of God, that in a merciful *Condescension* to the Prejudices of the *Jews*, the Observation of that Law and its peculiar Rites should be indulged for a while, and that the Abrogation of it should not be urged upon them all at once, but by Degrees; which was accordingly done. And I shewed the great Wisdom and Reasonableness of this Method. Our Author has not offered the least Answer to the Proofs I had brought for this*; but contents himself with assuring his Reader, that I have not answered any Thing that had been said, but that *I ramble on upon a Presumption, that the ceremonial Law had been at first in St. Paul's Account an immediate Divine Institution, and consequently a real Matter of Religion and Conscience to those who were under it, but was now vacated, and done away, or repealed by Revelation; but that, for this, I have not the least Authority from St. Paul, nor any other Apostle, p. 91.* And if he can make such a general confident Assertion pass with any of his Readers for a sufficient Answer to all the Proofs I had alledged, he is a very lucky Man: In the mean Time, till he offers something new, I shall pass this by, together with his choice Flowers about *Fox-Hunting* and a *Wild-Goose Chase*, and pursuing or not pursuing an untamed Creature.

He next observes, p. 92. That “*Moses had given the Laws to the People as a standing perpetual Ordinance throughout all their Generations, and that, consequently, any Abrogation or Repeal of it must be contrary to the Nature and declared Intention of the Law it self.*” And he observes, that to this I answered, that the Words *for ever, everlasting, &c.* do not always signify to

* See all this proved, *Divine Authority*, p. 400--410.

the End of the World. This, indeed, was one Thing I urged, but it is far from being the Whole of what I offered, as this Writer thinks fit to represent it. It was farther observed, that whatever we suppose the Extent of those Phrases *for ever*, and *throughout their Generations* to be, the Design was only to signify, that *Israel* should be obliged to a perpetual Observation of those Laws till God should signify his Will to the contrary; and that it was never to be abrogated by any human Authority, nor were the People themselves to cast off the Obligations of it by any Act of their own. But it was not the Design of those Phrases to signify, that God himself would never change or abrogate those Laws. On the contrary, *Moses* himself plainly signified, that they might afterwards expect a new Law and new Institutions from God, and directed their Thoughts to another that was to arise *like unto him*, to whom they were to *bearken*, and to do what he should *command* them in the Name of God. And that, afterwards, the Abolition of the Law, and the introducing of a new Dispensation, was more clearly signified by the Prophets. And finally, that the very Nature of the Law it self plainly shewed, that it was not designed to be of invariable Continuance *. Of all this our Author takes not the least Notice; only observes, that it is very plain, that the *whole Nation* ever understood it so. Which is far from being true, since it hath been often shewn, by evident Testimonies from the *Jewish* Writers, that some of them have acknowledged, that in the Days of the *Messiah* there should be a *new Law*, and that the ceremonial Law of *Moses* should be abolished †. And if the *Nazarene* or

* See *Divine Authority*, p. 99--102.

† The Reader may see several express Testimonies to this Purpose collected from the ancient *Jewish* Writings, in Bishop Chandler's Defence, &c. p. 359, 360.

Christian Jews were (as he urges) for a long Time *zealous for the Law*, it only shews the great Power of Prejudice; tho' many of those that had been converted from among the *Jews* to the Christian Faith did, in Process of Time, come to see their Liberty.

He goes on to acquaint us, *p.* 93. that he had urged, "That *Moses* had established Propitiations and Atonements for Sin, by the Blood of Beasts; and that *St. Paul* had declared it to be impossible that the Blood of Bulls and Goats should take away Sin." And then he says, speaking of me, "The Author grants this Contradiction, and yet says it is no Contradiction. *For though the Blood of Beasts might take away Sin under the Law, yet it could not do it now the Law was abolished.*" It is thus he represents my Argument, and puts these last Words in an *Italick* Character, to lead the Reader to think they were my own Words. Any one that compares this with what I had offered in the Book he pretends to answer, *p.* 102, 103. will find how far this is from being a fair Representation of the Argument.

As to the *Contradiction* he speaks of, there is no more a Contradiction, according to the Doctrine of the Apostle, between the *Sacrifices* appointed under the Law and the *Sacrifice* of Christ, than between the Substance and the Shadow, the *Type* and the *Anti-type*. The Apostle's Doctrine is plainly this, that the legal Sacrifices could not, by any Virtue of their own, purge away Sin, or make the Offerer perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience. They were external Atonements in the Eye of the Law, upon offering of which, in the Manner there prescribed, the Person was legally clean, and free from the Penalty he had incurred, and the Guilt he had contracted. But they were

not in their own Nature a proper Satisfaction to God, and a sufficient *Expiation* for the Sins of Men. And in this Sense it was then, and always will be, impossible for the *Blood of Bulls and Goats to take away Sin*. And therefore they were not instituted merely for their own Sakes, but with a farther View, as Types and *Presignifications* of that most perfect Sacrifice to be offered in the Fulness of Time, viz. that of the Son of God, who *thro' the eternal Spirit offered himself without Spot to God*, and hath appeared once in the End of the World to *put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself*; which being infinitely superior to that of Bulls and Goats, had a much greater Virtue and Efficacy, and could alone do that in Reality which the Oblations under the Law could only do in Type and Figure. This is evidently the Apostle's Doctrine, and upon which the Strain of his Arguing depends.

What hath our Author to say to this? Can he deny that the Apostle all along, in that Epistle, supposes the Law of *Moses*, particularly with regard to the Sacrifices and Priesthood, to have been of Divine Institution, even where he is arguing for its being abolished? It is incontestably evident, that in the whole Course of his Argument, he not only grants but *asserts* this; as appears from the Passages cited in my former Book, p. 82, 83. Nor has this Writer any Thing to offer against it, but the old Story, that if it had been originally a Divine Institution, and afterwards set aside by Revelation, the Apostle *Paul* could not have observed that Law in any one Instance. And upon saying no more than this, which had been so fully answered, he thinks fit to triumph over me, as not capable of Conviction, or of *thinking out of the common systematical Track*, p. 94.

I had mentioned the Apostle's declaring, " that the legal Sacrifices *sanctified to the purifying of the Flesh* ; and that this external Atonement is what *Moses* intends as the immediate Consequence of the Priest's sprinkling the Blood." But he cannot for his *Life* understand, or make any Sense of this external legal Purification and Atonement. And the Truth is, as he represents the Matter, no Body can understand it. He cannot (he says) make any Sense of this external legal Purification and Atonement for Sin, where no Sin had been committed, for which the Law required the Sacrifice, and no Sin could be pardoned or done away by it. p. 94. This, indeed, is absolute Nonsense, to talk of a legal Atonement for Sin where no Sin had been committed against the Law, and no Pardon could be obtained by it. But then the Nonsense is his own, and he may take the Credit of it. This external legal Purification and Atonement for Sin did suppose that a Sin had been committed for which the Law required the Sacrifice, and that the Sin or Fault was done away or pardoned in the Eye of the Law. And this is what the Apostle calls *sanctifying to the purifying of the Flesh* ; i. e. a Person was upon offering the Sacrifice outwardly sanctified or cleansed ; he was clear in the Eye of the Law from the Guilt he had contracted. When, therefore, he goes on wisely to ask, *was legal Sin no Sin, and legal Forgiveness no Pardon or Remission of Sins at all ?* I answer, legal Sin was a Sin or Fault committed against the Law ; and legal Forgiveness was a Pardon or Remission of that Sin in the Eye of the Law, and whereby a Person was set legally clear and free. But he cannot conceive what Sin could be forgiven or atoned for by a Man's offering a Sacrifice in the legal Way, unless it was the Sin of not offering it, which would have been punished with Death, for any wilful presumptuous

Refusal. This again is compleatly absurd. Let us suppose a Man had committed a Sin or Fault for which the Law required Sacrifice to be offered, and that upon offering the Sacrifice, and doing what the Law required, it was declared, that his Sin was forgiven him. The Question is, what Sin was forgiven him? Any Man of common Understanding would take it, that it must be the Sin on the Account of which he offered the Sacrifice, which was no longer to be charged upon him, nor was he to be obnoxious to any Penalty on the Account of it. No, this Writer *cannot conceive* this at all; but he *can conceive*, that the Sin that was declared to be forgiven him upon offering the Sacrifice, was the Sin of not offering the Sacrifice; *i. e.* a Sin which he had not committed: For he did offer the Sacrifice. Our Author, who undoubtedly designs by this to expose the Mosaic Constitution, has only manifested his own Absurdity, and shewn what an excellent Expofitor he would prove, if he was left to interpret the Scriptures in his own Way. He then goes on to repeat what he had said in his former Book, that no Punishment was ever remitted on the Account of the Sacrifice that was offered, except the Punishment which must have been inflicted for Disobedience, in Case of not offering the Sacrifice. This is exactly repeating the same Nonsense in other Words which he had urged before, concerning remitting a Punishment that had not been incurred, and pardoning a Sin that had not been committed.

He next proceeds, p. 95, 96. to say something about *Types*. And he begins with observing, that I seem, by my *Way of talking upon it, to understand no more about the Nature and Use of Types than a Child when he is taught such Things in his Catechism*. And, therefore, he condescends in his superior Wisdom to instruct me. And what he

faith

saith on this Subject amounts to this; That all Types are bare *Allegories*, which had no original Resemblance to the Things to which they are compared, but are only afterwards accommodated by Way of Allusion and Illustration. And I will readily grant this Author, that it does not prove, that *Things had originally any such Sense, Meaning, or Construction, merely because they are afterwards referred to in a Way of Allegory, Simile, and Allusion.* And that such *Allegories and Allusions may serve for Illustration in comparing one Thing to another, where there is any Resemblance, but that they cannot alone establish any doctrinal Truth.* In this our Author has made no Discovery, and has told me nothing but what I knew as well before. But still the Question remains, whether in the original Institution of the Law of *Moses* there was not, in the Design of God, a Reference to what was to come under the *New Testament* Dispensation? And whether some of the Rites and Ordinances, there prescribed, were not originally so contrived by the supreme Wisdom as to be intended as *Types and Prefigurations of good Things to come?* In which Case they differ from mere *Allegories*, which without having been originally intended, are only afterwards accommodated by Way of Allusion. And our Author saith nothing at all to shew the Absurdity of such a Scheme as this. This is evidently the Scheme the Apostle *Paul* goes upon. And tho' we could not demonstratively have urged this without such Information, yet if the same Divine Spirit, by whom those Ordinances were instituted, enlightened the Apostle in discovering the original Intention of them, this is a sufficient Authority in the Case. And now, by comparing the one with the other, as represented by the Apostle, the beautiful Harmony and Correspondence between the *Type* and the *Antitype*

appears; and this gives a noble and comprehensive View of the Divine Wisdom, and shews one uniform glorious Design still carrying on from the Beginning.

In p. 96, 97. he repeats what he had said in his former Book, concerning the Mosaick Law being in St. Paul's Opinion a *Dispensation of Darkness, Slavery, &c.* and that therefore it could not be a Divine Institution; and that it is directly contrary to the Gospel. What he had offered on this Head was fully and distinctly considered, to which he has not vouchsafed the least Answer. I need not therefore take any farther Notice of it, nor of some other Things here said by him, which he had repeated twice or thrice before in this very Section, and which have been already considered. He concludes, with an Attempt to prove, that the Epistle to the *Hebrews* was not written by St. Paul: But he himself had, both in his former Book, and in this very Section, supposed, that St. Paul was the Author of it. For, p. 93. he urges, that St. Paul had declared it to be impossible, that the Blood of Bulls and Goats should take away Sin. And it is only in the Epistle to the *Hebrews* that this Declaration of St. Paul is to be found. But it happened to be for his Convenience, at that Time, to suppose St. Paul to have been the Author of this Epistle; and now, a few Pages after, it is most for his Convenience to deny it. And what does he produce to shew, that that Epistle was not written by St. Paul? Why? It is plain to him, that it is not written in that Apostle's Style and Language. There is nothing in it of his Loftiness of Expression and Strength of Imagination. This Author has a very nice Taste; but others, that are as good Judges as he, find it nothing inferior to

any of his Epistles in Strength or Loftiness. And the Learned *Spanheim* hath produced a great Number of Expressions in this Epistle parallel to those in his other Epistles, and many of them peculiar to *St. Paul*, and only to be found in his Writings *. He farther urges, that *St. Paul's* not setting his Name to this Epistle, as he did to all his genuine undoubted and authentic Writings, is alone sufficient to set aside this Epistle, &c. But *St. Paul's* not prefixing his Name to it cannot be alone a Proof that he did not write it, if we have other sufficient Reasons to believe him the Author of it. And, I think, we have sufficient Reason, both from the Testimony of the most ancient Writers, who mention it as *St. Paul's*, and the general Consent of the *Greek Church* from the Beginning †, and from his Way of concluding that Epistle, exactly after *St. Paul's* Manner, *Chap. xiii. 18, 19, 24, 25.* and talking of his coming to see them with *Timothy*, whom he represents as set at Liberty, and whom he calls his Brother; and from the Testimony of *St. Peter*, who plainly makes mention of an Epistle written by *St. Paul* to those to whom *Peter* directed his Epistle, that is, to the believing *Hebrews*.

But our Author farther urges, that "it is plain to him, that this Epistle must have been written after the Destruction of the Temple, and the Cessation of the Jewish Priesthood and Sacrifices, because it never mentions the Temple or Sacrifices as then subsisting; but always speaks of the Jewish Priesthood and OEconomy as abolished, done away, and ceased." On the contrary it

* See his Dissert. *De Authore Epistolæ ad Hebræos*, Part II. cap. 1, 2. Part III. cap. 1. § 9.

† See the Dissertation now mentioned, Part I. cap. 6. And the English Reader may consult *Whitby's* Preface to his Commentary on that Epistle.

may be argued, that throughout that whole Epistle he speaks all along as if the Temple were still in being, and its sacred Rites and Ceremonies still in Use among the *Jews*. And it can scarce be supposed, that if this Epistle had been written after the Destruction of the Temple, the Author of it would have omitted the Mention of this, which might have been of considerable Advantage to his Argument. In the Epistle ascribed to *Barnabas*, and which is written pretty much on the same Subject with that to the *Hebrews*, the Destruction of the Temple is expressly mentioned, *cap. 16*. Where, speaking of the Temple, he saith, *it is now destroyed by their Enemies*. Then, citing a Prophecy, to shew, that the City, Temple, and People of *Israel*, were to be given up, he adds, *and it hath come to pass according as the Lord spake*. An evident Proof that this Epistle was written after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. And if the Epistle to the *Hebrews* had been written after that Event, we might have expected some Hints of this Kind. But no such Thing appears*. As to what the Author urges; that this Epistle *always speaks of the Jewish Priesthood and Economy as abolished, done away, and ceased*: No more is said in this Epistle to this Purpose, than in other Epistles which are undoubtedly *St. Paul's*, and written before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. As in the Passages before referred to, *p. 236*. where he declares, that *Christ hath broken down the middle Wall of Partition between Jews and Gentiles*: And, that *he hath abolished the Law of Commandments in Or-*

* He speaks, *Chap. viii. 13*. of the Covenant's *growing old*, and being *ready to vanish away*, *εγγύς ἀφανισμῶς*, *near an Abolishment or Disappearing*; which seems to shew, that the Time for its utter Abolition or vanishing away by the Destruction of the Temple and City of *Jerusalem* was not yet come, but was very near.

*dinances, &c. and hath blotted out the Hand-
 writing of Ordinances, and hath taken it away,
 nailing it to his Cross.* Here, it is evident, St.
Paul speaks of the legal OEconomy as abo-
 lished and done away in Christ, that is, that the
 obligatory Virtue of it was ceased, in Epistles
 written whilst the Temple was yet standing. And
 yet our Author here takes upon him to affirm, that
 “the Apostle never would have done this in his
 “Time, while he himself was complying with it
 “occasionally; and pronounces it to be a most
 “wild and extravagant Notion, that the *Jewish*
 “Priesthood and Sacrifices had been abolished and
 “done away, while the whole Christian Circumci-
 “sion was under it, and submitting to it, p. 100,
 “101.” The Consistency of the Practice and
 Conduct of St. *Paul* and the other Apostles, in this
 Matter, hath been fully shewn. But I cannot help
 observing, by the Way, the great Consistency of
 this Writer, who, in his former Book, had strong-
 ly asserted it over and over as a most certain Matter
 of Fact, that could not be denied, that St. *Paul*, in
 all the Synagogues of the *Jews* throughout the *Lesser*
Asia, had preached up to the *Jews* themselves the
 Abrogation of the ceremonial Law, and endeavoured
 to convince them that it was done away by the Death
 of Christ, as if he had made this the constant Subject
 of his Preaching; which is carrying the Matter a
 great deal too far; but in his present Book repre-
 sents the supposing him ever to have talked of the
 Abrogation of the Law at all, as so *wild and extra-
 vagant a Notion, that it deserves no Consideration*
at all. What can be done with an Author that so
 glaringly contradicts himself, and seems to have no
 settled Scheme of Principles at all, but affirms or
 denies Things, just as best answers his present Pur-
 pose?

C H A P. VI.

That the Law of Moses did not extend only to the outward Actions, but to the inward Dispositions. That it did not confine Benevolence to those of their own particular Body, nor was founded in the Principles of Persecution, shewn in Opposition to the Author's Attempt to prove the contrary. What he further offers to prove, that humane Sacrifices were indulged and encouraged in that Law, shewn to be vain and insufficient. His Exceptions with regard to the Case of Abraham's offering up Isaac, considered. That Patriarch vindicated from his Charge of Enthusiasm.

THE Author had, in his first Book, affirmed, that the Law of Moses was merely political, and that it could only relate to outward Actions, but could not relate to the inward Principles and Motives of Action, whether good or bad. In Answer to which I shewed, by express Testimonies from that Law, that it did not relate to the outward Actions alone, but to the inward Principles and Motives of Action. Upon which he now observes, that all political Laws must presuppose the Reasonableness of inward Truth and Righteousness, but yet it is only the outward Practice or political Part that can be guarded or secured by Force: This is all that can be done by any temporal penal Laws, p. 104. But the Argument,

ment, I urged, was this, that *Moses* did not merely *suppose*, but frequently and expressly *require* and *enjoin* a right Disposition of the *Heart* and *Mind*, as well as a proper outward Practice; and therefore this must be regarded as properly the Subject-Matter of his Law.

Our Author himself, after shifting a while, owns that *Moses* preached moral Truth and Righteousness to the People, but then this he did not as a *Lawgiver and Judge*, but as a *Prophet and Preacher of Righteousness*. This is really granting the Point in Question. For it must be considered, that it was as a Prophet extraordinarily inspired of God, that *Moses* delivered his Law. And the Design of it was not merely to erect that People into a *civil* Community, but into a *sacred* Polity. It was not therefore merely a System of *political* Precepts, intended to regulate their outward Actions and civil Conduct in Society, but to form them to just Sentiments and a right Practice in *Religion*, and to give them Directions as to the whole of their Conduct. And, therefore, it contains solemn Commands and Injunctions, in the Name of God himself, their supreme Lawgiver, relating not only to their outward Behaviour, but to the inward Affections and Dispositions of their Minds. And these Precepts are as express as any other Commands of the Law, enforced by the same Divine Authority by which the other Commands are enforced. And tho' the Neglect of those Precepts that required good inward Dispositions of Mind, could not come under those Penalties in the Law that were to be inflicted by the *civil* Magistrate, yet they came under the general *Sanctions* of the Law, as enforced by the Hopes of the Divine Favour, and the Fears of the Divine Displeasure, to which they were taught by *Moses* to have a continual Regard. And, therefore, no Reason can be given why
these

these should not be as properly regarded as a Part of that Law, as any other Laws or Injunctions there prescribed. And in this View good Men considered the Law, and extolled its great Usefulness and Excellency, as *enlightning the Mind, purifying and rejoicing the Heart, and converting the Soul, &c.* Psalm xix. 7.

I had urged the Tenth Commandment as forbidding all *coveting*, &c. The Author answers, that this relates to the *outward Act of Robbery, Rapine, Violence, &c.* And not barely to the *inward Act of coveting, desiring, or wishing for, &c.* But how does he prove that it doth relate to the outward Act of Rapine, &c. The Reason he gives, is, because if this was not against Rapine and Robbery, there is no Commandment in the Decalogue against it. As if the Law, commanding *not to steal*, was not a sufficient Prohibition of Robbery and Rapine, especially in so short and comprehensive a Collection of Laws as the Decalogue is. But both the Propriety of the Words themselves naturally lead us to interpret the Tenth Commandment, as principally relating to the inward Desires and Motions of evil Concupiscence; and the Apostle Paul so interprets it, as I shewed, which this Writer thinks proper to take no Notice of. And tho', as he urges, the *inward Act of coveting* could not possibly fall under the Cognizance of any human *penal Law*, yet it could fall under the Cognizance of a *Divine Law*, and of God, the Giver of that Law, whom they were taught to regard as their supreme Governor and Judge, who perfectly knew their Hearts, and from whom they were to expect Rewards and Punishments accordingly.

He had mentioned it as a Defect in *Moses's Law*, that it provided no sufficient Remedy against *Intemperance, &c.* But now he owns, that in the Passage I quoted from *Deut. xxix. 19, 20. Moses* threatens

threatens such Sinners, as indulged themselves in Drunkenness and Intemperance, with the Vengeance of God, as Offenders against the Rule and Law of Righteousness; but he would have me produce a Statute or Law of Moses, where such Acts of personal Intemperance are made penal, i. e. where civil Penalties were enacted against them. But, surely, if Moses threatens such Sinners with the Wrath of God, and that all the Curses written in the Law should be upon them, as in the Passage I produced, this, to those that regarded it as the Law of God, enforced by his express Authority, ought to have had a mighty Weight. And if, notwithstanding this, that Nation run into great Excesses of Intemperance, as this Writer alledges, this was not to be charged upon the Law, but upon the Corruption of Mankind; no more than the Corruption of Christians is to be charged upon the Gospel-Law.

But he farther observes, that "St. Paul every where distinguishes the Law of Moses from the Law of Faith, Fidelity or Righteousness towards God. And that he proves at large, that Righteousness could never be obtained by the Law, which was a Law of Works, or outward Obedience only, p. 105." But this Author entirely mistakes or misrepresents the Apostle's Sense, and seems to have no just Notion at all of the Design of his Arguings on this Subject. St. Paul doth not represent it as if the Law only required outward Obedience, whereas the Gospel requires inward Righteousness; nor doth he, by calling it the Law of Works in Opposition to the Law of Faith, intend to signify, that it only required external Works, or Acts of Duty. This would be to make him contradict himself, and subvert his own Argument. For he expressly represents the Law as extending to the inward Motions of the Soul,

Soul, and as forbidding and condemning the inward irregular Workings of *Concupiscence*; and that, therefore, it was by the *Law* he came to the *Knowledge of Sin*. He declares, that the *Law* was *holy, just, and good*; and that it was *spiritual*, tho' Men were *carnal*, Rom. vii. 7-14. And he proves, that by the *Works of the Law* could no Man be justified, that is, accepted in the Sight of God, and entitled to Life; which is what he means by *Justification* in this Argument, because no Man could perfectly obey its Precepts. And, therefore, his Doctrine is, that we must be justified or accepted only thro' the infinite *Grace* and *Mercy* of God, by which *Faith* or a steady Dependance on his Faithfulness, Truth, and Goodness, issuing in a sincere Obedience, and the Practice of Righteousness, is graciously accepted and rewarded, tho' imperfect, and attended with Failures and Defects. Thus *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, who was so highly favoured of God, and upon their Descent, from whom the *Jews* so highly valued themselves, was justified before the *Law* was given. He believed God; and it was accounted unto him for *Righteousness*; that is, he exercised a firm Trust and Dependance on his Faithfulness, Goodness, and Mercy, and on his most gracious Promises, and shewed the Reality of this Faith by his Obedience and ready Submission to the Significations of the Divine Will, and therefore was accepted and justified before God, tho' he had not yet received Circumcision, nor was any Part of the ceremonial Law yet instituted. And when the *Law of Moses* was afterwards given, the Design of it was not to alter or annul the Promise made to *Abraham*, or render it of none Effect. Still good Men, even under the *Law*, were justified and accepted of God, as *Abraham* had been, not merely by their *Works*, or Obedience to the *Law*, which Obedience being defective, could not, in strict

strict Justice, entitle them to a Reward, but by their Faith and Trust in the Divine Grace and Mercy, productive of a sincere tho' imperfect Obedience. The Law was added, as the Apostle speaks, *because of Transgressions*. It was given to restrain Idolatry and other Offences, to discover to Men their Duty, and to convince them of Sin, to keep them under a strict Discipline and Tutorage, suited to that Time and State of Things, till the Time should come for the last and most perfect Revelation of the Divine Will, and for the full Discovery of the Divine Grace and Mercy thro' *Jesus Christ*, the promised Saviour. This seems to be the Account the Apostle gives of the true original Design and Intent of the Law. And, accordingly, Christ being come, that peculiar Oeconomy is abolished. And as *Abraham* was justified without the Observance of the *Mosaick Law*, or any of its peculiar Rites and Ceremonies which were not then instituted; so Christians now are justified without observing any of the peculiar legal Rites and Injunctions, which were only imposed for a Time till the promised Seed should come, in whom all Nations were to be blessed. They are accepted and justified as *Abraham* was, freely, by Divine Grace thro' Faith, or a steady Trust in God, and Dependance on his Mercy, Faithfulness, and Goodness, and on his most gracious Promises, and the Revelations he hath given of his Will, accompanied with a sincere tho' imperfect Obedience to his holy and excellent Precepts. But this Faith, now required of us, hath a more explicate Regard than that of *Abraham* had to the Redeemer, as being now actually come, and in whom the exceeding Riches of the Divine Grace and Mercy are most gloriously display'd, and freely offered and exhibited.

But to return to our Author: He had laid a mighty Stress upon it, as an insuperable Objection against

against the Mosaical OEconomy, that tho' it obliged those that were under it to live in Peace and Amity with one another, yet they were put into a State of *War* with the rest of the World; and that the *Jewish* State, or the Religion of *Moses*, was founded on the Principles of *Persecution*. In Opposition to this it was clearly shewn, by express Testimonies from the Law it self, that it prescribed to the People of *Israel*, who were constituted under it, a kind and benevolent Conduct not only towards one another, those of the same Community, but towards *Strangers* of any other Nation that were among them, whom they were most expressly commanded to treat with the utmost Kindness and Humanity. And, whereas, this Writer had urged, that this was only to be understood of such *Strangers* as were incorporated with them, I shewed, that it extended to all *Strangers*, tho' not incorporated into their peculiar Polity, nor observing any of their particular Laws and Rites, provided they did but worship the one true God, free from *Idolatry*; nor were they ever to persecute any for not conforming to their peculiar Rites, and Forms of Religion and Worship.

But the Author is resolved to persist in his Charge. And the great Thing he alledges to make it good, is, because of their distinctive Rites and Usages, whereby they were kept separate from other Nations, which he represents as obliging them *not so much as to converse with those of any other Nation, nor to shew them the least Marks of common Respect, Civility, or Decency?* And, he thinks, there could not be a *more effectual Method taken to establish a State of eternal Enmity and War between them and the rest of the World* than this. And that it was not possible, that a People thus constituted could propagate the true Religion to other Nations but by Force of Arms. And that this, therefore,

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was a *Declaration of War with the rest of the World, made and confirmed by their very Constitution*, p. 107, 108. And he repeats it again, p. 112. It will be acknowledged, that by the Mosaick Constitution there were many distinctive Rites and Usages appointed, the Design of which was to keep them from incorporating with other Nations, lest they should learn their corrupt Customs, and by too great a Familiarity be drawn into a Conformity to their idolatrous Rites. And the Proneness they shewed to revolt to the Usages of other Nations, notwithstanding all this Care to keep them distinct, shewed the Wisdom and Expediency of this Constitution. But tho' they were thus kept distinct and separate from other People, it doth not follow, that therefore they were hereby *put into a State of War* with them by their very Constitution; nor that they were obliged not so much as to *converse* with them, or shew them the *least Marks of common Respect, Civility, and Decency*. There is no such Thing urged upon them in their Law. They might, notwithstanding their distinctive Rites, shew them all the Offices of Humanity. It is observed concerning the ancient Egyptians, Gen. xliii. 32. *That they might not eat Bread with the Hebrews; for that is an Abomination to the Egyptians*. And therefore when Joseph entertained his Brethren with great Kindness, they had Bread set for them by themselves. And Herodorus observes, concerning the Egyptians in his Time, that they would not make use of a Knife, a Spit, or a Pot belonging to the Greeks; nor take a Bit of Beef cut with a Greek's Knife. Herod. Euterpe. Cap. 41. And after this, Cap. 78. of the same Book, he concludes his Discourse concerning their Feasts, with this Observation, παρσι-
νοι δὲ χρεώμενοι νόμοις ἄλλοις ἐδένα ἐπικτήσας τοῖσι:
Using their own Country-Customs, they receive no
O *other*

other besides them. And afterwards, *Cap. 91.* that as they use no *Greek Customs*, so *μὴδ' ἄλλων, &c.* neither would they use the Customs of any other Men in the World. Yet this did not hinder the *Egyptians* from conversing with those of other Nations; nor were they for this regarded as in a *State of eternal Enmity and War with the rest of Mankind*. Nor did it hinder them from propagating their Religion, since by the Author's own Acknowledgment, they were the great Propagators of *Idolatry* to other Nations. And tho' he takes upon him to affirm, that a People constituted as the *Jews* were could have no other Way of propagating their Religion but by Force of Arms, the contrary to this is evident from undeniable Fact. For they did propagate the true Religion, and did profelyte great Numbers of other Nations all over the *Roman Empire*, as well as in *Babylon, Persia*, and many Parts of the East, without using any Force of Arms. There might be some Pretence for charging the *Mosaick Constitution*, as putting the *Jews* into a State of War with the rest of Mankind, if any Passage could be produced out of the Law, urging the *Jews* to such a Conduct towards all other Nations, as *Socrates* is introduced by *Plato* prescribing to the *Greeks* with Respect to the *Barbarians*, which was a Name they generally gave to all other Nations but themselves*.

* He would have the *Greeks* look upon one another as all of the same Family and Kindred, but upon the *Barbarians*, as *Strangers and Aliens*: That the *Greeks* were φίλοι εἶδος, *Friends by Nature*, and therefore they should not go to War with one another; or if they did, they should do it as if they were sometime to be reconciled; but that the *Barbarians* were πολεμίαι εἶδος, *Enemies by Nature*, with whom they were to be continually at War: That it would therefore be wrong for the *Grecians* to destroy *Grecians*, to reduce them to Slavery, or waste their Fields, or burn their Houses, but that they should do all this to the *Barbarians*: See *Plat. de Repub. l. 5. Op. Tom. 2. p. 470, 471.*

To what I had observed, that, by the Law of *Moses*, they were expressly obliged to shew Kindness not only to one another, but to Strangers too, our Author answers, as he had done before, that it was only to their own *naturaliz'd Strangers*, or the *Profelytes who lived among them*, and *who worshipped the same God*, and *made a Part of the same Nation*, p. 108. And he represents it as an extraordinary Piece of Assurance in me, to deny that the *Profelytes of the Gate* were *naturalized Strangers*, or that they were considered and owned as *Members of the same Society*, p. 109. The Reader, that is at all acquainted with these Matters, will be apt to smile at this Passage. This Writer had, in what he said on this Head in his former Book, shewed his utter Ignorance of the *Jewish* Constitution: I endeavour'd to set him right, and shew him his Mistake; That though the *Profelytes of Righteousness*, who were circumcised and obliged to observe the whole Law, were *naturalized*, and looked upon as *Jews*, and belonging to their particular Body or Polity; yet the *Profelytes of the Gate*, who worshipped the true God, but were not obliged to any of the peculiar *Mosaicks* Rites *, never were looked upon as *naturalized*, or belonging to that particular Polity or Body, but were still regarded as *Gentiles*, and as the *Pious among the Gentiles*. But our Author is resolved to persist in his Error. He had said, They were *naturalized*; and he is resolved that it shall be so: And not only will not receive Information when it is offer'd him, but is for abusing those that are not as ignorant, or will not speak as improperly as himself.

* Thus we find the *Strangers within their Gates*, that is, who were suffered to dwell among them, and to whom they are so often commanded to shew Kindness in the Law, are allowed to eat that which died of it self; which was expressly prohibited to every Jew. *Deut. xiv. 21.*

His Proof that they were naturalized, is pleasant enough. " I am very sure (says he) that, by the " Law of *Moses*, they were to be received, considered, and treated as Brethren and Fellow-Citizens, and were under the Protection of the Law " as much as the circumcised *Jews* themselves, " while they lived among them. And this was " all that I meant by Naturalization." Who would not admire the Acuteness of this Writer? that is, because they were to be treated very kindly and tenderly; therefore they were naturalized, or regarded, as belonging to their peculiar Nation or Polity. Whereas the proper Conclusion from it is this; That it hence appears, that though they were not (as it is certain they were not) regarded as belonging to their peculiar Polity or national Body; yet they were to be treated with the utmost Kindness and Humanity. Though, if we should allow this to be a sufficient Proof of their Naturalization, it would only prove, contrary to this Writer's Intention, that the *Mosaick* Constitution was of a large and noble Extent. For it seems all the World were *naturalized*, and looked upon as belonging to their Body, only upon worshipping the one true God free from Idolatry, and without observing their peculiar Rites and Ceremonies.

But he makes an Attempt, if he could prove it, that would be something more to his Purpose. After having told us, That the Proselytes of the Gate *made a Part of the same Nation*, he saith; That though they were not circumcised, yet *they complied with the sacrificial Part of the Law, and paid their Tithes and Dues to the Priests*. He expresses himself as if he intended to put it upon his Reader, that the *Proselytes of the Gate*, who were uncircumcised, observed all that Part of the *Mosaick* Law that related to *Sacrifices*. And this every Body, that is not a Stranger to that Constitution,

tution, knows to be a great Mistake. The *Gentiles*, indeed, were allowed, though not obliged to offer some Kinds of Sacrifices to God, as Sacrifices had been a Part of Worship in Use before the Law was given; but there were many Sacrifices required on particular Occasions, and which all the *Israelites* or *Profelytes of Righteousness* were obliged to offer in the Manner there prescribed; but the *Profelytes of the Gate* never were required, nor so much as permitted to offer them, or any Sacrifices that had the peculiar Rites of the Mosaick Law intermixed with them; nor to pay *Tithes*, *First-fruits*, &c. These were so far from being required of them by the Law of *Moses*, or by any of the *Jewish* Constitutions, that if they should offer them, they were to be rejected. See all this fully proved by the learned Mr. *Selden*, *De Jur. Nat. et Gent.* Lib. iii. Ap. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

As to what he saith, that “*Solomon*, when he “built the Temple, assigned a particular Court for “those devout *Gentiles*, who came up with their “Gifts and Offerings to *Jerusalem*; and he prays “for them, that God would bestow upon them all “the Favours and Blessings of his own People, “p. 109.” This only proves against himself, that that Constitution was not on so narrow a Foundation as he represents it: For *Solomon* is there praying for *Strangers* that were not of the People of *Israel*. See *1 Kings* viii. 41, 42, 43. But it doth not prove, that those *Strangers* were regarded as naturalized and incorporated into their peculiar Body and Polity without Circumcision. And, indeed, the very Name of *the Court of the Gentiles* (though it does not appear that there was any Court with that Name in *Solomon's* Time, as there was afterwards) shews that they were still regarded as *Gentiles*, and not as belonging to the *Jewish* Nation or Body at all; and therefore they were not suffered

to come within those Limits, into which every Jew and every Profelyte of Righteousness was allow'd to come; and it was considered as penal, if they transgressed those Bounds.

Page 110. The Author gives a signal Instance how much he is to be depended upon in representing the Sense of his Adversaries. He represents me as pretending, " That though Persecution for
" Conscience-sake, or establishing true Religion by
" Force of Arms, would be wrong now, and must
" be wrong under all Circumstances of which we
" can judge; yet it does not follow, that therefore
" it was wrong under a Theocracy, or under the
" Circumstances of the *Israelites*, when that Law
" was given." This, he says, is the *Sum* of my whole *Argument under this Head*: Where he very candidly puts it upon his Reader, that I have acknowledged, that *Persecution for Conscience-sake, or establishing Religion by Force of Arms*, was allowed, and even prescribed by the Law of *Moses*; when the Design of that Part of my Book was to shew, That the Law of *Moses* did not prescribe Persecution for Conscience-sake. And then he proceeds, very formally, to argue against Persecution for Conscience-sake, or establishing Religion by outward Force and Violence. He urges, That " the Argument depends on the eternal, immutable Reason and Fitness of Things, the moral Perfections of God, and the Nature of Religion it self, &c." But he might have spared his Argument; and, instead of proving, that to force Religion upon the Conscience, or to force the outward Practice against Conscience is wrong, he should have proved, That in the *Mosaick* Constitution, Persecution for Conscience-sake is established. On the contrary, it is certain, that in that Constitution there was no Attempt to be used to force Religion upon Conscience and inward Judgment, or to force the outward Practice

Practice

Etice against Conscience and inward Judgment. No Person of any other Nation was ever to be forced to embrace the Mosaick Law, or to observe any of its particular Rites or Constitutions against their own Judgments or Consciences. Their Benevolence was not to be confined to those of their own particular Form of Religion or Worship, but was to extend to all that worshipped the One God, the supreme Lord of the Universe; nor were such Persons obliged to worship him by any of the peculiar Rites of the Law. And how happy would it have been for the World, if this had been imitated by all other Constitutions? They were not, indeed, to suffer any *Idolaters* to dwell in their Land; and if any of their own Nation openly revolted to the Worship of other Gods, he was to be put to Death; because, as I shewed *, this was subversive of the very fundamental Constitution of their Polity, and of that original Contract upon which their State was founded, and on which their Preservation, as a Community, their Right to all their Privileges, and to their Country it self, depended. So that those that were guilty of Idolatry were, in the worst Sense, *Traitors* and Enemies to their Country. And if our Author will call this Persecution, he may, if he pleases, call all putting Persons to Death for being engaged in a *Conspiracy* to subvert the State, Persecution. But let him prove, by any Argument, from the Nature of Things, either that it was unworthy of God to appoint and establish a Constitution, the fundamental Principle of which was the Acknowledgment and Worship of the one only living and true God, and to make this the Condition of their national Privileges and Prosperity; or that, supposing such a Constitution, it was contrary to the Nature and Perfections of God,

* See *Divine Authority*, p. 130, 131.

or to the Reason of Things, to make a Law, that those that attempted to subvert that Constitution by worshipping other Gods, should be punished with Death. But, for ought I know, he may think it unfit for God himself to execute Judgments on Idolaters either in this World or in the next, for fear of forcing Conscience; and on this Account may find as much Fault with the *Christian* Constitution, as being contrary to the Rights of Conscience, as he had done by the *Mosaical*: Since it is there expressly declared, That *Idolaters shall not enter into the Kingdom of God*. See *Gal. v. 20. 1 Cor. vi. 9*. But we expect he should bring other Proofs of this than his own confident Assertions; which, with me, and, I believe, with the Generality of his Readers, pass for nothing at all.

He had asserted in his former Book, that the *Jews* were *not only set at Liberty, but encouraged and directed by Moses himself to extend their Conquests as far as they could, and to destroy by Fire and Sword every Nation that would not become their Subjects and Slaves*. That *their Plan of Government was contrived for Conquest*; and that *Moses commands all Idolatry to be exterminated by Fire and Sword, not only in Canaan, but in all the rest of the World, as far as his People should have it in their Power*, and that of this *Moses was very confident*. In Answer to this it was shewn, that tho' they were not to tolerate *Idolatry* in their own Country, as being absolutely subversive of the fundamental Constitution of their Polity, yet they were never commissioned to *destroy* Idolaters in the rest of the World by Fire and Sword. And it is so far from being true, that their Plan of Government was contrived for *universal* Conquest, as this Writer represents it, that the whole Frame of their Constitution was rather so contrived as to discourage a restless Ambition of enlarging their Empire. And the

Laws

Laws given them were of such a Nature, as rendered it extremely difficult, if not impracticable for them, to make and maintain large Conquests abroad. And tho' *Moses* knew and expressed his Confidence that they should conquer the Land of *Canaan*, and the Nations there, because God had promised it, yet he was so far from being *very confident*, as our Author affirms, that they should extend their Conquests thro' the rest of the World, that he knew and foretold the contrary: All this was clearly and fully proved *. Nor does this Author so much as attempt to answer any of the Proofs that were brought; but yet, that he may make a Shew of Answering, he tells us, *p.* 111, 112. that *Moses* was confident his People should conquer the Land of *Canaan*, whereas what he had to prove was, that he was confident they should conquer the rest of the World; and then falls into a furious Invective, as he had done several Times before, against the War with the *Canaanites*; and that this shews *Moses* thought Fire and Sword the best Way of propagating true Religion. But the Destruction of the *Canaanites*, as hath been shewn, was in Execution of God's just Vengeance upon those Nations, not merely for their Idolatry, but for the most abominable Wickedness and Vices of all Kinds. And this was not Persecution, any more than the sending Fire and Brimstone upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* was Persecution, or than a Man that executes the Sentence of a just *Magistrate* in punishing a Criminal, may be said to persecute that Criminal. Our Author's following Discourse, *p.* 113. in which he instructs me, that Things are sometimes ascribed to God in Scripture which were only permitted in the Course of his Providence, might be something to the Purpose, if he could prove that the Destruction of the

* See *Divine Authority*, *p.* 133, 134, 135.

Canaanites is only ascribed to God in the same general Sense in which all Evils and Calamities are; but it is evident, that according to the Representation there given, it was executed by the *express* Command of God himself, notified and confirmed by the most illustrious Attestations. But this Case hath been fully considered above. To which I refer the Reader, that I may not, like this Writer, be guilty of continual Repetitions.

He had in his former Book asserted, that *among the Free-will Offerings offered by the Jews under the Law, human Sacrifices were looked upon as the most efficacious and acceptable to the Lord. And that such Oblations were encouraged and indulged under the Law as the biggest possible Acts of Religion and Devotion, when they were intended and given up as Sacrifices to the true God.* In Answer to this it was shewn, from the Nature and Constitution of the Law, that such Sacrifices were not allowed there, since there are no *Directions* any where concerning human Sacrifices, as there must have been in that Constitution, if they had been intended to have been *indulged as the biggest Acts of Devotion.* For they were most expressly and solemnly forbidden to *add* to the Law, or *diminish* from it: And, particularly, were not to offer any other Sacrifices, or in any other Manner, than was there expressly appointed: This alone would be a sufficient Answer to this Writer's Insinuations. But, besides, it was shewn by an express Testimony from the Law it self, *Deut. xii. 30, 31.* that it prohibited human Sacrifices.

Our Author, in Answer, assures his Reader, *p. 115.* that he had *clearly proved, and beyond the Possibility of any fair Answer,* that human Sacrifices were indulged and allowed, tho' not enjoined by the Law of *Moses*, and that they were supposed and included among the several other Cases of *Vows* or

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Free-will Offerings. He had, to this Purpose, in his former Book, cited *Lev. xxvii. 28, 29.* To which a particular Answer was given, and it was shewn, that it was not capable of the Interpretation he put upon it. But he pronounces the Answer I had given to be *shamefully evasive*, and *contrary* to my own *Convictions*. And the Account he gives of it is this, "He pretends (says he, speaking of me) that the Persons or Things to be given up and devoted to God in Sacrifice, by a special or absolute Vow and Free-will Offering, as *Lev. xxvii. 29.* were devoted and given up to him as a Curse; or in a Way of Vengeance, as the *Canaanites* were." Where he represents me as pretending, that that Passage, *Lev. xxvii. 29.* relates to Persons or Things that were to be given up and devoted to God in Sacrifice, by a special or absolute Vow and Free-will Offering. Whereas this is what I expressly deny. I there shew that the 28th Verse relates to Things which a Man should devote to God by a special Vow out of all that he had, that is, that belonged to him in Property, not merely to be given up in Sacrifice, for it will not be pretended, that the *Field of his Possession* was to be offered in Sacrifice, but to be employed in sacred Uses: And it is there determined, that whatever a Man should thus devote to God by a special Vow, whether Person or Thing should be *holy to the Lord*, that is, perpetually employed to the Uses to which it was devoted, and that it was never to be redeemed. But the 29th Verse doth not relate to Things which any Man should devote of his own Possession and Property, which was the Case of all *Free-will Offerings*, but to Persons solemnly devoted to Destruction for just Causes; that none of these were ever to be redeemed, no Ransom whatsoever was to be accepted for them, but they were surely to be put to Death. This is the Account which
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the *Jews* give of this Passage ; and which makes it perfectly consistent with other Passages in the Law ; which this Writer's Interpretation of it is not ; nor does he produce so much as the Shadow of an Argument to shew that it is not to be understood in that Sense. And I referred him to Mr. *Selden*, by whom this is largely and accurately handled.

But he again produces the Instance of *Jephthah's* sacrificing his Daughter, as he had done before. I had observed, that *whether Jephthah did really sacrifice his Daughter is a Question debated among the most learned Criticks, both Jews and Christians, and still like to be so.* This our Author explains thus. *That is, says he, they have doubted whether this Story, as the Scripture relates it, is true or not, or whether the Historian has here given us the real Matter of Fact ; for they could have no other real Ground or Cause of Doubting.* But if this Writer had known much of the Matter that he undertakes to talk about, he would have known that the Question or Doubt in this Debate is not whether the Story, as given by the Historian, is true, for this is agreed on all Hands, but what is the true *Meaning* of the Historian. The Controversy is about the Sense of some of the *Hebrew* Phrases made use of in relating the Story, whether they import that *Jephthah* really sacrificed his Daughter or not.

But supposing *Jephthah* did really sacrifice his Daughter, it only follows, as I observed before, that he did *Wrong* in it thro' a mistaken Zeal and Scrupulosity, since the Law of *Moses* no where allowed human Sacrifices. This our Author denies ; and yet soon after says, that *Jephthah's Rashness in making such a Vow, and thereby laying himself under such a Necessity of Law, was never approved of.* But how could it be thought an Instance of *Rashness* in *Jephthah* to make such a Vow, or how can this

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Writer consistently acknowledge that it was *never approved of*, when he tells us, that *among the Free-will Offerings offered by the Jews under the Law, human Sacrifices were looked upon as the most efficacious and acceptable to the Lord*; and that they were *encouraged and indulged as the richest Donations*, and were *regarded as the highest possible Acts of Religion and Devotion*? If this had been the Case, how comes it that *Jephthah* has always been blamed for it by those of his own Nation that have supposed him to have offered such a Sacrifice, and that no other Instance can be produced of any of their great and good Men that ever offered up a human Sacrifice, thro' the whole Course of their History?

To the Testimony I produced to shew, that the Law forbids such Sacrifices, the Author answers, that the *Passages* I have referred to, *where God absolutely forbade this People to worship and offer Sacrifices to him after the Manner of the Heathens, conclude nothing at all*. But this is not a fair Representation of my Argument. In the Passage I produced from *Deut. xii. 30, 31*. God not only prohibits the People of *Israel* to worship him as the Heathens worshipped their Gods; but the *sacrificing their Sons and Daughters* is expressly mentioned as one Instance of their Worship, which was an *Abomination to the Lord*, and the *Israelites* are forbidden to do so to the Lord their God. And if this be not a manifest Prohibition of human Sacrifices under that Constitution, it is hard to conceive what can be so. As to what he adds, that it *would be hard to find any Sort or Kind of Sacrifices in Use among the Heathens, that Moses did not adopt into his own Scheme of Superstition, only they were not to be offered in the same Places, nor to the same Gods*, p. 117. This is far from being true. The offering up of *Swine* was counted a valuable Sacrifice among the Heathens, which yet was held in Abomination among the

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the *Jews*; and many other Animals that were offered in other Nations were not allowed in the Law of *Moses*. And that in these, and several other Instances, the Rights there prescribed, were contrary to those of the Heathens, is what may be proved with the clearest Evidence. I need not take Notice of what our Author goes on to offer concerning the *local, tutelar God of Israel*, or *popular Idol of Israel*, which he is sure could not be the true God, *p. 118, 119*. He had said this before. And he is never weary of repeating his precious Conceits, and obtruding them over and over upon his Reader. But this hath been fully considered above, *p. 198, &c.*

He next comes to vindicate the Argument he had brought from the Law about the Redemption of the *First-born*, *Exod. xiii.* He had urged, that that Law laid the *Israelites* under a *legal Obligation* to sacrifice their First-born Children unto God, but that "this Law was afterwards very much mitigated, or rather repealed, *viz.* by God's accepting all the Males of *Levi* for the First-born Males of all, as a Ransom or Redemption of their Lives." And he added, that "God hereby remitted the legal Obligation of human Sacrifices, and left it to the free Choice and voluntary Oblation of the People, whether their Burnt-offerings of this Kind should be Male or Female, and whether it should be the First-born or not." I had taken this, as if the Author intended by God's *remitting the legal Obligation of human Sacrifices* to signify, that he only remitted the Obligation they were under to offer up their *Male-Children* as Sacrifices or Burnt-offerings to the Lord, but that still they were to offer up some of their Children, only they were at Liberty to offer *Male or Female*, and *whether they were First-born or not*. The Author exclaims against this as a gross Abuse of him; and represents it, as if his Intention in saying, that God then

remitted the legal Obligation of human Sacrifices was to signify that the People were thereby absolutely freed from any Obligation to offer any human Sacrifices at all. I am willing to allow this to have been his Sense, since he affirms it to be so. But then I cannot understand, to what Purpose he there immediately adds, "That God left it to the free Choice, and voluntary Oblation of the People, whether *their Burnt-offerings of this Kind* should be Male or Female, and whether it should be the First-born or not." Does not this seem naturally to imply, that they were still to offer *Burnt-offerings of this Kind* to God, but that the *Remission* or *Mitigation* consisted in this, that they were left at Liberty to offer any of their Children, Male or Female, First-born or not? Thus I took it, and thus it was obvious to understand it, especially considering his Manner of introducing it, that *this Law was very much mitigated, or rather repealed*. A Way of speaking which no Man would have chosen, that had intended plainly and clearly to signify, that it was totally and absolutely abrogated and repealed; and that they were under no Obligation to offer any human Sacrifices at all. And yet because I had thus understood it, he talks of my being transported beyond all the *Bounds of Truth, Reason, or Conscience*; that all my *Friends must blush for me*. And he very gravely asks, *Does this Man believe a God or a Judgment to come?* I so far believe it, that I would not, for any worldly Consideration, be guilty of such Falshoods and gross Misrepresentations as I take this Writer to be guilty of, and even in the Management of this very Argument. In order to make it answer his End, he represents it as if the Law concerning God's claiming or reserving the First-born of *Israel, as holy, to himself*, was one Law; and the Law concerning their *redeeming* the First-born, was another Law;

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see p. 123. and that the Law concerning redeeming them was a Repeal of the Law by which God claimed them to himself. But this is intirely misrepresented : For in the very original Law, relating to this Matter, where God challenges the First-born as his, they are expressly commanded to *redeem* the First-born of Man, at the same Time that they are commanded to *sacrifice* the First-born of clean Beasts. So that as I observed in my former Book, the original Law, which this Writer refers to, *Exod. xiii.* is so far from laying the *Israelites* under a *legal Obligation* to offer their First-born as Sacrifices unto God, as he is pleased to represent it; that to have done so would have been the most express and manifest *Breach* of that Law *. As to what he pretends, that the First-born among Men were said to be *holy to the Lord*, as well as the First-born among clean Beasts; and that this signifies, that they were both set apart as *holy to the Lord*, in the same Sense; that is, they were both to be sacrificed : This is very strange, when that very Law expressly provides, that the First-born among clean Beasts *were* to be sacrificed, and the First-born among Men were *not* to be sacrificed, but redeemed. But he adds, That “ this is the more evident, “ because when the *Levitical* Males came to be “ substituted for the First-born of the other Tribes, “ the Expression is quite alter’d; and it is not said, “ they shall *be holy to the Lord*, as the others were “ before; but they shall *be mine*, i. e. my chief “ Servants, or peculiar Favourites.” Here we have another Specimen of the Sincerity of this Writer, and how much he is to be trusted in his Accounts of Things. He boldly affirms, and lays a great Stress upon it, that the Expression, when speaking of the *Levitical* Males, *is quite altered*

* See *Divine Authority*, p. 154.

from what it was in the Law concerning the First-born : For, in the one Case, it is said, They shall be *holy to the Lord* ; in the other, God declares, They *shall be mine*. If this had been true, the Observation would have been low and trifling, and would have proved nothing at all. Since I suppose he will hardly say that a Person or Thing's being *holy to the Lord* is a Proof of its being to be offered to God in Sacrifice ; or that when it is said (as it often is) concerning the Priests, that they were *holy to the Lord*, it signifies they were to be sacrificed, see *Lev. xxi. 6, 7*. But it happens, that what the Author so confidently affirms, is entirely false. For in the original Law concerning the Redemption of the First-born, it is said of them as of the *Levites* afterwards, *they are mine*, *Exod. xiii. 2, 12*. And, in the very Passage he refers to, where the Levitical Males were taken instead of the First-born of the Children of *Israel*, as it is said, the *Levites shall be mine*, it is immediately added, *because all the First-born are mine*, *Numb. iii. 12, 13*. I need not take any Notice of the Way he pretends to account for the *Israelites* being brought into the settling the Priesthood, &c. in the Tribe of *Levi*, viz. because they were hereby freed from the Obligation they were under of sacrificing their First-born. This goes upon the Supposition, that they looked upon themselves as having been legally obliged to sacrifice their First-born by that very Law that enjoined them *not* to sacrifice their First-born, but to *redeem* them ; a Thing, that as stupid as they were, could not have entered into their Heads, but was a Discovery reserved for the extraordinary Sagacity and Penetration of this Writer.

He next proceeds to the Case of *Abraham*, p. 126, &c. which I had considered fully and distinctly. He has not thought proper to answer

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what was offered, but thinks it sufficient to represent me as going upon *If's* and *May-bee's*; and, no Doubt, this will be esteemed a full Confutation of my whole Reasoning on this Subject.

But he urges, that *it is the most absurd and ridiculous Supposition in the World, that God himself should command this to try what Abraham would do in such a Case, as if God did not know as well without it.* But it is not pretended, that it was for his own Information that God did this, nor is this ever the Meaning of the Phrase of his trying Persons, which is frequently made use of in the sacred Writings; but it was to give *Abraham* an Opportunity of discovering to the World the excellent Temper of his Mind, and exhibiting a lasting Example to all Ages. And this Author himself owns, p. 128. That “it served to shew the Strength “and Invincibility of *Abraham's* Faith and Trust “in God, and that he was ready to do any Thing, “or part with any Thing, at his Command, “p. 128.”

The Way he takes to account for *Abraham's* Conduct in this Matter is one of the most extraordinary that ever was invented. The *Canaanites*, it seems, told him, that if he would sacrifice his own Son, God would raise him from the Dead, and they would worship the God of *Abraham*, and be of his Religion, p. 129. And *Abraham* was such a Fool, as upon this, and no other Foundation, to entertain a *strong and indubitable Persuasion and Impression upon his Mind*, that God would do as the *Canaanites* had said, yea, and fancied that God appeared to him, and commanded him to sacrifice his own beloved Son *Isaac*, the Heir of all the Promises. And if all this was merely owing to the Strength of his own Fancy, no Account can be given why this indubitable *enthusiastick Persuasion* did not carry him actually to execute it.

I had shewed the great Absurdity of supposing, that *Abraham's* believing he had such a Command from God was owing to the Force of his own *Enthusiasm* *. Our Author, without troubling himself to answer what had been alledged to this Purpose, pronounces that it was an *irrational enthuasiastick Persuasion, which God himself could never have been the Author of*; and to shew that it was so, he urges, that *Abraham*, according to the Representation made of it by the Writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, was *persuaded that God would certainly raise his Son from the Dead, if he sacrificed him*; whereas, says he, *it is certain that God had never intended or promised any such Thing*. It will be easily allowed, that God had not promised it. Nor if he had, would *Abraham's* Self-denial, and Trust in God, and Submission to his Will in this Instance, been so illustrious. But he had promised, that *in Isaac should his Seed be called*; and he did not doubt, but that Promise would be accomplished in God's own Way. And when he received the Command about sacrificing his Son, he *reasoned* with himself as the Apostle to the Hebrews represents it, *Heb. xi. 19.* not that God had *promised* to raise his Son, but that he *was able to raise him* from the Dead; and he concluded, that God would do this rather than fail of the Accomplishment of his Promise. There is nothing in this, but what is just and sober Reasoning, and which shews a calm and steady Temper of Mind, a sound Judgment, as well as eminent Faith and Trust in God, as I observed, *Divine Authority*, p. 158.

As this Writer thinks fit to charge this upon *Abraham's Enthusiasm*, so he gives us a plain Hint, that he looks upon all the Promises and Appearances of God to *Abraham*, and consequently

* See *Divine Authority*, p. 162, 163, 164.

the Covenant founded upon them, to have been nothing else but wild Enthusiasm. For he intimates, that if *Abraham* was mistaken in this, he might be in other Cases too, where he depended on any immediate Revelation or Communication from God, p. 129. So that this *Father of the Faithful*, so much celebrated by *St. Paul*, and of whom our Author himself frequently affects to speak with Respect, was the Father of *Visionaries* and *Enthusiasts*. However, he has here let us know his own Opinion, and it may go as far as his Authority goes; but the Instance he produces proves the quite contrary of what he pretends to prove by it. For he refers to the Prediction made to *Abraham*, that his Seed should be *Strangers, oppressed and afflicted in a Land that was not theirs*, and at the End of 400 Years should come out with great Substance, and come to the Land of *Canaan*, *Gen. xv. 13, 16*. He wants to know whether this be supposed to be a *Prophecy*, or a conditional *Promise*. I answer, that it was a *Prophecy* or *Prediction*, and not merely a *Promise*. For that his Seed should be afflicted, &c. could not be a *Promise*? But then he urges, that it was not accomplished. And in order to make this appear, he is pleased to represent it, as if it had been promised or foretold, that at the End of the 400 Years they were to be put into the quiet, peaceable Possession of the Land for ever, or throughout all their Generations, p. 129. But there is no such Thing there promised or foretold. All that is there said is, that at the End of four hundred Years, *they, Abraham's Posterity, shall come hither again*, that is, to the Land of *Canaan*; but how they were to possess it, whether in a quiet and peaceable Way, or by War, or how long they were to continue there, is not said. But what is immediately there added, as a Reason for their not coming thither sooner, viz. that the *Iniquity of the Amorites* is

not yet full, seems plainly to intimate, that it was to be by the Expulsion of the *Canaanites*, who were then to be exemplarily punished for their Iniquities. All which was punctually and literally fulfilled.

As to what he observes from Dr. *Hyde*, that this Case of *Abraham* was the original or first Occasion of *human Sacrifices* all over the East; there is no Proof of this. And *Abraham's* Case rather furnished a manifest Proof, that human Sacrifices were what God would not accept, since tho' he was pleased to lay this Injunction upon him for the Trial of his Faith and Obedience, yet he expressly forbade him, by a Voice from Heaven, to execute it. Concerning which, see *Divine Authority*, p. 155, 172.



C H A P. VII.

What he offers to shew the whole Power of the Government, by the Mosaick Constitution, was vested in the Tribe of Levi, examined. His vain Attempt to vindicate what he had said concerning the Priests having twenty Shillings in the Pound upon all the Lands of Israel. The Falshood and Extravagance of his Computations shewn. The Burden of the legal Priesthood not the Cause of the Revolt of the Ten Tribes from Rehoboam. The Law of Moses did not forbid all Enquiries into the Reasons of its Injunctions. Reasons for several of those Injunctions given in the Law it self. Sabiisme prohibited in the Law of Moses, which was the most ancient Kind of Idolatry that prevailed among the Eastern Nations.

OUR Author next proceeds to vindicate what he had said concerning the Power and Revenues of the Priesthood under the Law of Moses. He is pleased to declare, p. 135. That my "Pretence, that he had asserted that the "Levites were exempted, by Law, from the "common Jurisdiction of the Law; and what I "say upon it, p. 180, 181. is nothing but Forgery and Abuse." I did not charge him with asserting, That the Levites were exempted, by

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Law, from the Jurisdiction of the Law; for he had not used those Words, *by Law*, and I kept religiously to his own Words in citing him. But I charged him with asserting, That "the *Levites*, though Servants in the Temple, had greater Rights and Immunities than any Prince, or first Magistrate, of another Tribe; and that *Levi* was a Tribe exempted from the Jurisdiction of the Law, and protected against it." See *Mor. Philos.* Vol. I. p. 141. The Falshood of this was plainly shewn, and that in that Constitution the *Levites*, or Priests, were not exempted from the Jurisdiction of the Law more than any other Persons, Our Author answers all that I had offered by saying, That *this is nothing but Forgery and Abuse*. A very compendious Answer this! and which must, no doubt, pass, with every intelligent Reader, for an effectual Confutation of the Proofs I had brought.

But he is pleased to mention some of the *legal Privileges*, in which the Meanest of the *Levites* were superior to the Princes, &c. of the other Tribes. See p. 133, 135. One of them is, that they *could not be obliged to civil Offices, nor to bear Arms*. And at this Rate he may also undertake to prove, that the Meanest *Clergyman*, or *Curate*, or *Teacher*, allowed by the Act of Toleration, has greater Privileges and Immunities than the greatest Magistrate in the Nation. As to what he saith farther there concerning their receiving *all the Revenues of the Nation*; this is not true, except by it be meant only their receiving the *Tithes*, and other *Dues*. And whereas he adds, that they were only *Lords and Judges, and not common Subjects*; I suppose he will hardly pretend that this was a Privilege belonging to the Meanest of the *Levites*, and that in a more eminent Degree than to the Princes and first Magi-

strates of other Tribes. He urges, indeed, p. 135. That *the Court was intirely Levitical, and therefore the Levites might easily evade the Jurisdiction of the Law in common Cases.* And this he has the Confidence to affirm, notwithstanding the clear Proof that was brought, and to which he has not been able to return the least Answer, that the inferior Judges, who were appointed by *Moses* to judge the People in the lesser Causes, and the seventy Elders that were appointed to judge in the more difficult and important Cases, were chosen out of all the Tribes, and not that of *Levi* only. It was shewn, that by the Acknowledgment of all the *Jews*, the great *Sanhedrim*, or supreme Council of Judicature, was to consist not merely of Priests and *Levites*, but of any other Persons, of other Tribes, that were qualified by their Knowledge of the Law; without which Qualification, even the *High-Priest* himself had no Right to sit there, by virtue of his Birth or Place.

Page 133. He repeats what he had said before, That the *supreme Power was in the High-Priest, by the Mosaick Constitution*; and that this is so very evident, that I could not deny it. And yet he knows I did deny it, and shewed that *Moses* himself, who was not the High-Priest, had the Government in his Hands during his own Lifetime; and that he appointed *Joshua*, who was not a High-Priest, nor of the Tribe of *Levi*, to succeed him in the Government of the People. And afterwards the supreme Power was vested in the Judges, who were extraordinarily raised, and appointed by God. And the Nation continued generally under their Government some Hundreds of Years. And when there happened to be no such Judge governing them, it is represented as a State of *Anarchy*; and that every Man did what was right in his own Eyes; though all the while there was

was an *High-Priest* among them : Nor was any one of those Judges a High-Priest except *Eli*, nor any of them, so much as of the Tribe of *Levi*, except *Eli* and *Samuel*. And as to the *Kings* who succeeded the Judges in the Government of the People, our Author himself acknowledges, that the High-Priest had not the supreme Power in their Time. But then he pretends, that the Peoples throwing off the supreme Power, vested in the High-Priest by the Law of *Moses*, was a fundamental Breach of their Constitution, and a *rejecting God* from being their *King*. But this is wrong represented. It was not the throwing off the Power of the *High-Priests*, who still continued to exercise their Office, under the *Kings*, as much as before, that is represented under this Idea ; but it was the throwing off the Government by *Judges*, who were Officers extraordinarily raised up, and appointed by God himself, to judge and govern the People, and instead of them, chusing to be governed by *Kings*, after the Manner of other Nations, who should succeed one another, in the Government, in a lineal Descent. But notwithstanding this, they still continued to acknowledge the Lord for their *God*, and still continued to be his *People*, in a special Sense, bound to the Observation of the *Mosaick* Covenant and Polity ; the Main of which still subsisted, after that Alteration, in their Form of Government, as well as before. Nor is it true, which this Writer suggests, that thenceforth it was *to no Purpose to ask Counsel of God, or consult the Oracle, when the High-Priest was become Subject*. For it is certain they still continued to ask Counsel of God, under their *Kings* ; and had his Direction, both by the Oracle of *Urim*, of which Instances were given *, and by *Prophets*, extraordinarily

* See *Divine Authority*, p. 235, 236.

inspired, from Time to Time. As to what he here again repeats concerning the God of *Israel's* being only a *local, oracular, tutelar Deity, the residential God of that Country*, the palpable Absurdity of this hath been already shewn. See above, p. 198, &c. to which I refer the Reader, that I may not, like this Author, clog him with continual Repetition.

He next proceeds to vindicate what he had said in his former Book, That it *would be easy to prove that the Church Revenues, under this Government, amounted to full twenty Shillings a Pound, upon all the Lands of Israel*. I had called this a *wild Assertion*; and I think so still. But our Author, after desiring the Reader to observe it as a Specimen of my *uncommon Talents*, and that this *shews I never rented an Estate my self, and paid the Rent*; which, to be sure, must be allowed to be a manifest Proof of my *Talents* as a Writer; proceeds to prove, That *the Revenue to the Priests could not amount, by Law, to less than an annual Rent upon the Lands*, which he explains to be a third Part of the yearly Produce or real Value of the Land, besides what the Priests and Levites might extort by the Power and Privileges granted them.

I must own that I understood him that the whole yearly Value of the Land went to the Priests; and though this appeared to me a very strange Assertion, yet I thought it not too extravagant for this Writer in his Rant against the Priests. But now he has reduced it to a Third of the real yearly Produce or Value of the Land; and allows, that the *People might live under it as well as a great Part of this and other Nations live now under a Rack-rent*. It must be considered, That the *Israelites* had, all of them, by their original Constitution, their Lands free Inheritance: Nor could their Lands be so alienated, but that they

were

were to return to them, and to their Families, at the Year of *Jubilee*. By their original Constitution they paid no other Taxes but the Tithes, and other Dues, for maintaining the *Levites*, Priests, and keeping up the publick Worship. They had no Taxes, or Tribute, imposed upon them, till they came under the Government of their *Kings*; which was a Government of their own chusing. For their *Judges*, though they had great Power and Authority to judge and govern them, yet did not put them to much Expence by the Splendor of Courts, nor by keeping up standing Forces. Whereas the People of *England* not only pay the annual Rent to their Landlords, but Taxes to the State, of several Kinds, besides the Dues to the Clergy; and, among other Dues, *Tithes*; and yet they are far from being so miserably poor and indigent, or so mightily impoverished, as he would persuade us the *Israelites* were by their original Constitution. But let us attend to our Author's Computations.

And first: He makes the *One Tenth*, that is, the *Tenth of Corn, Wine, Oil, Fruits, &c.* to be equivalent to *three Tenths of the annual Rent of the Land*; because it was *neat and free from Labour and Expence in Cultivation and Tillage*. And if it had not come neat and free from the Expence of Cultivation, it could not have been called a Tenth at all, or have been of any great Advantage to them. But he adds, That *after this had been taken away*, the Priesthood had a *Tenth of all the Beasts, clean and unclean*, and the *First-born of all Beasts*, which he puts as a *Tenth more*; tho', he says, it might easily be proved, that it *much exceeded a Tenth*. But he reckons both together as *two Tenths, or a Fifth*. And then he adds, that "since the Stock upon a landed Estate must, upon an Average, amount to, at least, two annual Rents, a Fifth of this will be two Fifths,"
 " or

“ or four Tenths, of the annual Rent, which, “ with the other three, make seven Tenths.” Here we may observe his great Accuracy in his Computations. First, he supposes, an Estate in Land to be entirely under *Tillage* or *Vintage*, so that the Corn and Fruits upon it make up the entire Value or Profit of the Land, and one Tenth of that is equivalent to three Tenths of the annual Rent; and then he supposes the same Land to be stocked with *Cattle* to the Value of two annual Rents, so that two Tenths of the Beasts upon it came to four Tenths of the annual Rent. So that the very same Land, is the same Year, both completely under *Tillage*, and under *Pasturage*; and this is the Supposition he makes concerning the whole Country; which, without pretending to any extraordinary Skill in these Matters, one may venture to pronounce to be a great Absurdity. But the Author is under a Necessity, and he must suppose it, in order to make up his Calculation. Another Fault in his Calculation is, that he affirms, that the *Levites* had a Tenth of all the Beasts, *clean or unclean*, which is not true; for no Tithes were paid of unclean Beasts at all, but only of the *Flock and Herd*, Lev. xxvii. 32. And of these, again, it was only a Tithe of the *Increase* that was paid annually. For the same Cattle were not tithed again every Year; so that it was really a Tithe of the young Ones, the *Calves* and *Lambs*, or *Kids*, that were brought forth that Year; and this is far from being equivalent to a Tenth of the grown Cattle every Year, or of the whole Stock upon the Land. To which it may be added, that what fell short of the Number *Ten*, which might often happen to be the Case among the poorer Sort that followed Agriculture, was not *tithable*; or if they had above *Ten*, whatever was short of the Number *Twenty*, paid only one

one Tithe: And all these Things will very much reduce his Calculation. And then, again, it is very wrong in him to make the *First-born* of the Beasts to be equivalent to a Tenth of all the Beasts, or of the whole Stock upon the Land in Value, or, as he states it, equivalent to two Tenths of the whole annual Rent. For it must be considered, first, that it was only the *First-born Males* that were to be given to the Priests, which is but one half of the *First-born*; and, in the second Place, that the *First-born*, *e. g.* of Sheep or Kine, were only to be considered as young *Lambs* or *Calves* *. And, I suppose, he will hardly undertake to prove, that supposing the *First-born* male Lambs or Calves to be a Tenth in Number of all the Lambs and Calves, that they were a Tenth in Value of the whole Stock of Sheep and Cattle upon the Land. And yet he absurdly accounts them so; and pretends, it could easily be proved, that it much exceeded the Tenth in Value. As to the *First-born* of unclean Beasts, they were allowed to redeem them, if they pleased, with a Lamb, or otherwise to kill them, if they thought them not worth it; in which Case the Priests got nothing at all. So that the Value of the *First-born* of any of those Creatures that were not to be sacrificed, whether of an *Ass*, which was the most common in those Countries, and is therefore particularly mentioned in the Law to this Purpose, *Exod.* xiii. 13. *Deut.* xviii. 16. or of a *Horse* or *Camel*, or any other Creature, that was not to be sacrificed, was never to be rated above that of a young Lamb.

* On the eighth Day they were appointed by Law to give the *First-born*, tho' not before, *Exod.* xxii. 30. that is, when it was eight Days old, they might give it, tho' they might keep it longer. And it was a general Rule, with Regard to all their Sacrifices, whether of *Bullocks*, or *Sheep*, or *Goats*, that they were accepted for Sacrifice from eight Days old, *Lev.* xxii. 27.

But

But let us follow our Author: He observes, that
 “ besides this the Tribe of *Levi* had a very confi-
 “ derable Share of the *Cities, Towns, Villages* and
 “ *Lands*, themselves, which by computing from
 “ the Places given and allotted to them by Law,
 “ would seem to amount to a seventh Part, at
 “ least, of the whole Country; but I shall put it
 “ only at a Tenth; and this, with what has been
 “ computed before, will make eight Tenths of
 “ annual Rent.” They had indeed 48 Cities al-
 lowed them, which fell to them by Lot. And if
 we may judge by what was allowed them out of
 the Tribes of *Judab, Benjamin* and *Simeon*, whose
 Share came as it is reckoned, *Joshua* xv. xviii. xix.
 to 155 Cities, out of which the *Levites* had 13
 allotted them, *Josh.* xxi. 4. which amounts to about
 a twelfth Part, supposing all the Cities belonging to
 those Tribes to be expressly mentioned, which is un-
 certain; and if they had more Cities than are there
 reckoned, the Share of the *Levites* will be still less
 in Proportion. ’Tis true, that the Share of the
Levites, in the other Tribes, seems to be greater in
 Proportion to the Number of Cities expressly assign-
 ed to these Tribes. But it is manifest, and allowed
 by the more judicious Commentators, that all the
 Cities belonging to the several Tribes are not dis-
 tinctly mentioned, but only the principal. For
 there are some Cities mentioned afterwards as be-
 longing to those Tribes, that yet are not reckoned
 at first in the Number of the Cities that are ex-
 pressly named as allotted to those Tribes *. So that
 we may justly suppose it was pretty much in the
 same Proportion in all the Tribes, especially consi-
 dering the Rule laid down by *Moses*, Numb. xxxv.
 8. when he appointed that 48 Cities should be allot-

* See Bishop *Patrick* on *Joshua* xviii. 28. xix. 7, 16, 23,
 31, 39.

ted to the *Levites*, viz. That from them that had many Cities they should give many; and from them that had few Cities they should give few; and that every one should give of his Cities unto the *Levites*, according to his Inheritance which he inherited. And, therefore, we may judge that the Cities were given to them out of all the Tribes in pretty near the same Proportion, which may be reckoned to about a Twelfth. But then it must be considered, that if they had a Twelfth, or even a Tenth, of the Number of Cities allotted them, they were very far from having a Twelfth, or even a fiftieth Part of the whole Land or Country. For the *Levites* had only the bare Cities given them, and no adjoining Towns or Villages; as it was in the Lots of the other Tribes, where it is still mentioned, that they had such and such Cities given them, with the Villages, or adjoining and dependent Towns. And most of those Cities, at that Time, were very small. Nor were the Cities of the *Levites* to be afterwards enlarged beyond those Walls any farther than a thousand Cubits, to which they were expressly confined for the Suburbs, and two thousand Cubits for the Fields; and this never to be exceeded*, see *Numb.* xxxv. 4, 5. *Lev.* xxv. 34. So that the whole of the Land allowed them, reckoning from the Walls of the City for the Suburbs and Fields, was but fifteen Furlongs on every Side, which is considerably less than a Mile; and this they were not to enlarge or exceed. For all, without those Bounds, belonged to the Tribe where their Lot lay. So that if there were an accurate Computation made,

* The *Jews* observe, that "in the *Levites* Cities they might not make of a City, the Suburbs, nor of the Suburbs a City, nor of the Suburbs a Field, nor of a Field Suburbs; but they were all to continue as they were, without being altered. See *Maimon.* in *Jobel*, Cap. 13. Sect. 4, 5. as cited by *Ainsworth* in *Lev.* xxv. 34."

all the Land allowed to the Priests and *Levites* would amount to a very small Part of the Country.

He next mentions the *stated legal Fees*, as he calls them, which he says were *very extraordinary*:

“As for a Woman after lying in, and when she came to be churched, for Persons that had been cured of any foul Disease, and many other Instances too long to be enumerated here. And, in any such Cases, if a Lamb of a Year old had been ordered, and the Person could not give it, or was not worth it, they must give a Couple of Turtles, two young Pigeons, a Tenth-deal of Flower, or what they could, if ever so little. So that if a Man was poor, the Priest would take all, and could have no more.” And he adds, that the occasional Fines for legal, accidental Uncleanesses, which might be unavoidable, and almost innumerable, can be reduced to no certain Calculation at all, *p. 138.* I shall consider this Matter distinctly, that it may appear how little there is in this Writer’s general Clamours.

As to what he talks about the *churching* of Women, as he calls it, the richest were to bring no more than a *Lamb* of the first Year (by which we are to understand not a *Lamb of a Year old*, as this Author represents it, as if it was necessarily to be a Year old when it was offered; but the Meaning is, that it was never to be above a Year old, but it was fit to be offered from *eight Days* old, as I have already observed) and a young *Pigeon*. And the Priest’s Fees in that Case were but small. For, as to the *Lamb*, it was expressly ordered to be a *Burnt-offering*, which was wholly to be consumed by Fire; and of which the Priest was not to eat any Thing. And even of the young *Pigeon* which fell to the Priest’s Share, Part was to be consumed on the Altar for a *Sin-offering*, Lev. xii. 6, 8. And this was all the Priest had in this Case, even from

from the Rich. As to what he talks about Persons that had been cured of any foul *Disease*; Men or Women that had any Disease of Uncleanneſs by Iſſues, were obliged to bring no more than *two young Pigeons* or *Turtle-Doves*. And of theſe one was to be for a *Burnt-Offering*, and to be all conſumed; of the other, which came to the *Prieſt's Share*, Part was to be conſumed on the Altar, as in the former Caſe; ſee *Lev. xv.* The Caſe in which the coſtlyeſt ſacrifice was required from any Perſon that was legally unclean, was that of a Perſon that had the *Leproſy*, which was the higheſt kind of Uncleanneſs: And in this Caſe, the *Prieſt's Share* came to *two Lambs*, which were to be offered as a *Sin-Offering* and a *Treſpaſs-Offering*, ſome of which was conſumed upon the Altar, and the greater Part came to the *Prieſt*. But if the Man was poor, there was only one *He-Lamb* brought for a *Treſpaſs-Offering*, and one young *Pigeon* for a *Sin-Offering*. As to the three *Tentb-Deals* of *Flower*, which were then to be offered for a *Meat-Offering*, amounting to about three *Pottles* of *Flower*, it was to be wholly conſumed, and the *Prieſt* got none of it.

Theſe kinds of Uncleanneſſes that have been now mentioned, were the only kinds for which ſacrifices were offered, as is evident from the Law it ſelf, and the *Jews* univerſally acknowledge. And with regard to the *Leproſy*, and a Diſtemper by an unclean *Iſſue* in Man or Woman, it is to be preſumed that there were many of the *Iſraelites* that never had them at all. And, as to the other kind of legal Uncleanneſs mentioned, *viz.* that of a Woman in *Child-bed*, it is to be ſuppoſed that it ſeldom came above once in a Year, and for the moſt part, not ſo often. In all other Caſes of legal Impurity and Uncleanneſs, which were many, and which the Author pronounces to be al-

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most innumerable, e. g. the Uncleanness of *Touching* any unclean Thing, the Carcass of an unclean Beast, or a human dead Body, &c. they were purified merely by washing or sprinkling; which brought nothing to the Priest: See *Lev. xi. 24, 31. Numb. xix. 16, 17, 18, 19.* and no Sacrifices were to be offered on these Accounts at all; except where Persons inadvertently came in their Uncleanness into the *Sanctuary*, and did eat of the holy Things, i. e. the Peace-Offerings, and afterwards came to know it. For of such Persons and Cases that passage is to be understood, *Lev. v. 2, 3.* by the Consent of all the *Jewish* Doctors*; nor indeed can it well be otherwise understood, if we compare it with the Places I have just referred to. In such Cases the richest were to bring no more than a *She-Lamb* or a *She-goat* for a *Trespass-Offering*; and, if they were very poor, no more was required of them, than to bring the tenth Part of an *Ephah* of fine *Flower*, i. e. about a Pottle, without *Oil* or *Frankincense*. See *Lev. 6, 7, 11.* so that this was made easy to the Poor. And we may reasonably suppose that this was not a Case that often happened: For it could only happen when they came into the *Sanctuary*, which, with regard to the Generality of the *Israelites*, was but at their great *Festivals*, which were only celebrated three times a Year; and they were then generally very scrupulously exact in shunning all ceremonial Uncleanness. With regard to many of the other Cases in which Sacrifices were required to be offered, e. g. the *Trespass-Offerings*, *Lev. vi. 2---7.* it is not to be doubted, that there were several Persons in *Israel* that seldom or never committed the Crimes for which those Sacrifices were appointed. The *Peace-Offerings* were by far the most numerous of any other; which

* Concerning which see *Ainsworth* in *Lev. v. 2.*

were Free-Will-Offerings in acknowledgment of Mercies received, or in Accomplishment of some Vow they had made; but, besides that, these were at the People's own Election, they cannot be properly reckoned among the *Revenues* due to the Priests, who had but a small Share of them: The far greater Part of these Offerings fell to the People themselves on whose Account they were offered, who feasted upon them with their Families. And as to the *Burnt-Offerings*, the Priest got nothing but the Skin. It appears from this Account of the *Mosaical* Sacrifices, that they were far from bringing in such a vast Revenue to the Priests, as this Author represents it.

But he has another Shift in order to make up his twenty Shillings in the Pound paid by the People to the Priests; and that is, "That there was a very great and enormous Poll-Tax laid upon the whole Nation, and to be paid in Money: Every Male, from twenty to sixty, was to pay half a Shekel three Times a Year, when they went up to the Sanctuary. And here the poorest Man was rated as high as the richest; and no Abatement to be made on Account of Circumstances. At the same Time no Man was to appear before the Lord, the Priest, empty-handed; but every one was to bring his Offering, or Present, with him; which, besides the Loss of Time and Hindrance of Labour, could not amount to much less than what was to be paid in Money, p. 139."

This furnisheth us with a new Instance how little this Writer's Representations are to be trusted, especially where the Law of *Moses*, or the *Priests*, are concerned. It is, indeed, required in the Law, That at the publick *Festivals*, when they came up to the Sanctuary, they were not to appear before the Lord empty, *Exod. xxiii. 15. Deut. xvi. 16.* But there

there is not one Word of their making any Present to the Priest; nor did any of the *Jews* ever understand it so. Their Doctors particularly understand it of a *Burnt-offering*, either of Beast or Fowl, according as they were best able to do it, which they were to offer the first Day of the Feast*; and this was consumed by Fire; and consequently the Priest did not get any Part of the Flesh of it to his Share. Besides which, the People commonly offered their *Free-will Offerings* at those Feasts; and these were left to every Man's own Inclination and Ability, according as the Lord had blessed him, *Deut. xvi. 16.* and upon these the People themselves feasted with their Families, and but a small Share of them came to the Priest. And, indeed, those were looked upon as Seasons of universal Joy and Festivity, in which the whole Nation met and rejoiced together, at the same Time commemorating the great Things God had done for them; and the observing these Festivals was looked upon as their Privilege. And something of this Kind, accompanied with an Intermision of their Labours has been usual in almost all Nations†. But as to this Author's Pretence concerning the enormous *Poll-Tax*, as he calls it, which every Male, from *twenty to sixty*, was to pay three Times a Year at their solemn Festivals, half a Shekel each Time, *i. e.* a Shekel and Half in the Whole; this is entirely his own Fiction, without any Thing either from the Law of *Moses*, or from any of the *Jewish* Writers to support it. It was, indeed, the Command of God to *Moses*, that when he should take the Sum of the Children of Israel after their Number, every one of them that was numbered, should give half a *Shekel* for an Of-

* See *Ainsworth* in *Exod. xxiii. 15.*

† See *Arist. Lib. viii. ad Nicomach. Cap. 2.* and a remarkable Passage in *Strabo* to this Purpose, *Geograph. Lib. x. p. 467.*

fering unto the Lord ; and that this Money should be appointed for the Service of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, *Exod. xxx. 12 — 16.* which was accordingly executed, *Chap. xxxviii. 25, 26.* But this Numbering was not at any of their solemn Feasts : Nor was there any Appointment made that there should be any annual Payment of this Kind for the Future. All that appears there is, That it was ordered for the present *building* the Sanctuary. It is true, That in After-times, particularly under the second Temple, every *Jew* above twenty Years old, was obliged to pay half a Shekel annually ; and the *Jewish* Doctors found this upon that original Appointment of *Moses*. But this will not at all answer the Author's Design. For first, it was but *half* a Shekel that was paid yearly ; whereas he makes it to have been a Shekel and a Half ; and then it was not paid, as he pretends it was, at any of their publick *Feasts* ; but was collected, by Persons appointed for that Purpose, in their several Cities ; who were to return their Payments into the publick *Treasury* by the 25th of the Month *Adar*, which answers to our *February*. Nor was it a Tax, as he represents it, paid by the People to the *Priests* : But the *Priests* and *Levites* themselves were as much obliged to pay it, by the *Jewish* Constitutions, as any others ; and the Design of it was for *publick* Service. Out of this Money they provided for the Expence of the publick Sacrifices offered in the Name of all the People ; both the daily Oblations, and those offered on the Sabbaths, new Moons, and solemn Festivals ; as also Salt, Wood, Incense for the Sacrifices, the sacerdotal Vestments, Salaries of several publick Offices, the Reparation of the Temple, building or repairing Walls, Aquæducts, Towers, and other publick Works which required a great Expence : So that sometimes the Money was not sufficient to

defray it. And if any of the Money was left, it was not to be put into the Pockets of private Persons, but was all to be laid out in extraordinary Burnt-offerings, which were called *the second Sacrifices of the Altar* *.

Our Author is not content to have forged a Poll-Tax of a Shekel and a Half, and made it part of *the vast Revenue of the Priests*; though it was but half a Shekel that was paid, and was a Tax upon the Priests, as well as others, for the publick Service; but in order to heighten it, he thinks proper to raise the *Shekel* to four times the Value. He himself owns that it answered by Weight to *two Shillings and eight Pence* of our Money; and all those that have made the most exact Computations, have given pretty much the same Account of it †. And yet, presently after, by a pretended Comparing it with other Things, he thinks it ought to be valued at *twelve Shillings* of our Money; but he is so modest as to be willing it should be reckoned at no more than ten. His Reason for thus enhancing the Value of a Shekel from half a Crown to ten Shillings, is, that two Shekels was the Price fixed, by the Law, for the best fat sacrificial Sheep. But this doth not appear. There is no Price fixed, by Law, for such Sheep at all; nor can it be supposed that they were always of the same Price: Though if it had been fixed at that Rate, it would only have followed, that Sheep were very common in that Country, and very cheap; which is certainly true. He adds, *That fifty Shekels was the Price fixed for a Man-*

* The Reader may see all this fully shewn, out of the most authentick Jewish Writings, by Mr. Selden, *De Jure Nat. et Gent.* Lib. iv. Cap. 5. et *De Synedr.* Lib. iii. Cap. 10. Sect. 2, 3, 4.

† See Bishop Cumberland of Scripture Weights and Measures, Chap. 4.

slave,

slave, and thirty for a Woman, Lev. xxviii. But that Law is not intended at all to fix the Prices at which Slaves, whether Male or Female, were to be sold in the Market; as if no Slaves were ever to be sold among the *Jews* for a greater Price than is there mentioned. They sold them there, as in other Countries, for what they could get, or what they were worth; which was sometimes more, sometimes less. *Maimonides* supposes a Servant might be sometimes worth a hundred Pounds, and sometimes not one. See *Ainsworth* in *Exod. xxi. 32.* But that Law, *Lev. xxvii.* relates to the Case of Persons that had made a *singular Vow*, as it is called, *ver. 2.* which was a voluntary Thing, to which no Man was obliged, whereby they vowed their own Persons, or their Children, or any that belonged to them in Property, to be the Lord's, for the Service of his Sanctuary, to assist in some meaner Ministrations, &c. In which Case they were excused from the actual Performance of the Service, and only obliged to pay the Valuation put upon them; and this Valuation or Estimation of their Persons was not arbitrary, left to the Pleasure of the Priest, but was fixed by a Law at a certain Rate never to be exceeded in any Case, in order to prevent any Imposition upon them; tho' it was to be diminished if they were poor, and the Priest was in that Case to estimate in Proportion to the Man's Ability, that had vowed, *Ver. 8.* And the Money arising from these Estimations did not go to the private Use of the Priest, nor was any Part of his Revenue, but, like the Half-Shekel, went to the repairing of the House of God, and other publick uses, *2 Kings xii. 4---10.**

Thus I have distinctly considered every Thing our Author has offered to make good his Charge

* See *Maimon. in Crachin. Cap. I. l. 10.*

of twenty Shillings in the Pound upon all the Lands of Israel, and by which he undoubtedly intended to expose the Priests and the *Mosaick* Constitution, but has only exposed himself, and shewn that he will stick at no Artifices or Misrepresentations to gain his Point. I need not take notice of his following Computations, p. 140, 141. and which are all built upon the false and absurd Suppositions he had made before. I shall only observe, that according to his usual way, he repeats what he had said in his former Book, that the ten Tribes revolted from *Solomon*, because of the Oppression they were under by the Law relating to the Priesthood, and that therefore they never submitted to *this Law or Priesthood more*, p. 140. This is entirely his own Fiction; since it was the Yoke of Taxes that *Solomon* laid upon them which they complained of, and we find no Complaint made by them concerning the Priesthood. And tho', thro' the Policy of their Kings, they were not suffered to go up to worship at the Temple at *Jerusalem*, yet the ten Tribes had still a Priesthood among them to whom they paid Tithes; and they still continued to offer Sacrifices and Free-will-offerings as prescribed in the Law of *Moses*. Concerning which see *Div. Author*. p. 326.

In p. 142. he passes by what I had said concerning the Nature, End, and Use of expiatory Sacrifices under the Law, and still declares, that for his Life he cannot see, that any thing was forgiven by that Law, otherwise than by suffering the Penalty prescribed, and thereby satisfying the Law itself. This, it must be owned, is a strange way of being forgiven, i. e. by suffering the Penalty prescribed. But this, he says, was the Difficulty, he had urged, that there could be no Pardon, where no Punishment or legal Demand is remitted; and of this, he pretends, I had not been able to give

one Instance, p. 142. But it was plainly shewn, that in that Constitution Sacrifices were supposed to avert the Penalty, that would otherwise have been due. And, therefore, in Cases where it was necessary for the Good of the Community, that the Penalty should be actually inflicted for any particular Crimes, Sacrifices were never appointed to be offered for those Crimes; and in Cases where Sacrifices were appointed, the Penalty that would otherwise have been due was remitted, of which Instances were given *. And upon the Man's confessing his Fault, and offering the Sacrifice in the Manner prescribed, it was declared, that the Sin he had committed was forgiven him. He was thenceforth clear and free in the Eye of the Law from the Guilt he had contracted. But here, perhaps, I shall be told again, that the Sin that was forgiven the Man upon offering his Sacrifice, was the Sin of not Offering his Sacrifice, the Absurdity of which has been already exposed. See above, p. 243, 244.

Our Author, who in his former Book had asserted, that *Moses* in his Law, made no Distinction between *Morals* and *Rituals*; but urged all alike merely as the positive Will of God, without ever giving any other Reason for it, now is pleased to acknowledge that *Moses* as well as the *Prophets*, urges the Reasonableness and Fitness of the Moral

* See *Div. Author* p. 195—197. To the Instances there mentioned, others might be added: Particularly, if any Person presumptuously and wilfully came into the Sanctuary and did eat of the holy Things in his Uncleanness, he was to be cut off from his People; that is, as the *Jews* understand this Phrase, he was to be punished by the Hand of God for his presumptuous Disobedience, done in Contempt of the Law; *Lev. vii. 20, 21. Numb. xix. 20.* But if he did it ignorantly, and came afterwards to know it, a Sacrifice was to be accepted for him, and he was, upon offering it, free from the Penalty. See *Answer to the Law. v. 2, 3, &c.*

Law,

Law, tho' it seems, he only did this as a Prophet or Preacher of Righteousness. But he denies, that as to the Ritual Law, *Moses* ever urged it from the Reasonableness and Fitness of Things, or from the Justice and Equity of the Ways of God. And he had asserted in his former Book, that the People were never to inquire into the Grounds and Reasons for which any of them were appointed. See *Mor. Phil.* Vol. I. p. 256. But the contrary is evident to any one that is acquainted with the Law of *Moses*. For with regard to several of the ritual Precepts, the Reasons of appointing them are expressly declared in the Law it self, e. g. in the Law of the *Passover*, *Exod.* xii. 26, 27. *Deut.* xvi. 3. and concerning the *Redemption* of the First-born, *Exod.* xiii. 14, 15. and in that concerning the *Sabbath*, *Exod.* xx. 11. xxiii. 12. and in that concerning the Offering of the *First-fruits*, *Deut.* xxvi. 1—12. to which many other Instances of the like kind might be added.

This Writer has nothing to say for himself in Vindication of the odious Representation he had made of the *Jews*, but that their own Prophets represent them as having been very wicked; that is, he applies what was said of them in the Time of their greatest Degeneracy and Corruption to the whole Nation at all Times and in all Ages. And whereas I had urged, that the *Jews* greatly exceeded other Nations, in that whilst they governed themselves by their Law, they acknowledged and worshipped the one living and true God, free from Idolatry; he says, this is a plain Proof, that I have never read the History of the Medes and Persians, in *Dr. Hyde de Relig. vet. Persar.* And he assures us as from *Dr. Hyde*, that the *Persians* had never from the very first Records of Time, fallen

• Concerning this Pretence see what is said above, p. 251.

into

into the *Sabian Superstition of worshipping Idols and tutelary Gods*, p. 144. The *Sabian Superstition* properly consisted in worshipping the Host of Heaven, as the Hebrew Word *Saba*, from whence it is derived, imports. And this the *Persians* were guilty of. Tho' they were not so corrupted as to lose the Knowledge of the supreme God, yet they paid Adoration to the *Celestial Luminaries*. Dr. Hyde himself acknowledges, that the ancient *Persians to the primitive orthodox Religion superadded Sabaiism, paying too great a Veneration to Stars and Elements*, Cap. I. p. 2. He supposes that the most ancient *Persians* were instructed in the true uncorrupted Worship of God by their great Progenitors *Sbem* and *Elam*, but that afterwards they lapsed into *Sabaiism* before the Time of *Abraham*, Cap. I. p. 3, 4. That that Patriarch himself was educated in the *Sabaiical Superstition*, which had then spread generally thro' the Nations, and that the *Persians*, as well as others, were involved in it, but that *Abraham*, who had many Contentions with the Worshippers of the Stars and of Fire, introduced a Reformation, and with great Difficulty and Danger to himself, propagated the true Religion in the East; and that the *Persians* probably learned *Abraham's Religion* after his Victory over *Chedorlaomer King of Elam*, Cap. III. p. 84, 86. He also owns, that after the Time of *Abraham*, the *Persians* relapsed into *Sabaiism* again, though they still kept themselves free from Image-worship, Cap. I. p. 3, 5. He tells us, that the *Persian Priests in India*, acknowledge a Lawgiver before *Zoroaster*, whom they call *Poreodekesbangh*, who was a Teacher of *Sabaiism*, and under whom there was a Diversity of Religion from that which afterwards prevailed under *Zoroaster*, Cap. I. p. 17. And after producing a Testimony from a *Persian Writer* in which he affirms, That *Perse antiquo Tempore*

Tempore erant de religione Sabaitarum, Stellas colentes usque ad Tempus Gushtasp Filii Lohrasp; That the Persians in ancient Time were of the Religion of the Sabians, worshipping the Stars till the Time of Gushtasp the Son of Lohrasp. The learned Doctor makes this Reflection upon it; Tunc enim eorum Religionem reformavit Zoroastres; That at that Time Zoroaster reformed their Religion; that is, he reformed it from Sabaism with which it had been corrupted, Cap. III. p. 87. By this we may see what to judge of the Authors Accuracy or Sincerity, who represents it as evident from Dr. Hyde's Account, that the Persians never fell into Sabaism, from the first Records of their Nation.

Indeed Sabaism was the eldest kind of Idolatry, and which spread very early among the Eastern Nations. And Moses took particular Care to guard the Israelites against it, by absolutely forbidding them to pay any kind of Worship to the heavenly Luminaries, as was usual among other Nations, and particularly among the Persians. See Deut. iv. 19. *Lest thou lift up thine Eyes unto Heaven, and when thou seest the Sun, &c.*

As to what he farther saith concerning the Jews learning the Doctrine of the Resurrection and a future Judgment from the Persians, this I had fully considered in my former Book; nor has this Writer brought any new Proof of it, except his confidently affirming that it is so, must pass for a Proof. But I shall have Occasion to take Notice of this afterwards, for he returns to it again, and insists upon it more largely in his seventh Section.

C H A P. VIII.

The Oracle of Urim and Thummim not designed to try private judicial Causes. The Answers of that Oracle did not depend on the Pleasure of the High-Priest. The Authors continued Misrepresentation of the Story of the Levite's Wife, and the War with the Benjamites, detected. The clear and circumstantial Predictions of future Events given by the ancient Prophets, a Proof of their divine Inspiration. Their Writings not corrupted by the after Revisors and Editors. The Distinction between the true and the false Prophets asserted, against this Writers Exceptions. His Attempt to vindicate the Charge he had brought against Samuel. A particular Examination of his farther Invectives against David.

HE now comes to vindicate what he had said in his former Book concerning the Oracle of Urim and Thummim. And he still persists in it that it was intended and established by Moses, to be the ultimate Resort in all judicial Causes, and to decide in private Matters between Man and Man, which I had denied. But instead of producing a Proof for this, he only asks the Question, "Why might not the High-Priest consult the Oracle privately in private Affairs, and Matters of Judgment, as well as publickly in publick Affairs?" The Answer is, because the Oracle in its original Appointment was not

not designed for deciding Causes between Man and Man, but for asking Counsel of God in Matters of a publick Nature. This appears from *Numb.* xxvii. 21. All the *Jews* with one Consent have understood it so; all the Instances recorded in Scripture, in which this Oracle was consulted, are of this kind; not one of them relates to judicial Causes, nor are they once directed in the Law to have recourse to *Urim* and *Thummim*, as the ultimate Resort in such Causes; but are directed to the *Priests* and to the *Judges* that should be in these Days. And yet this Writer will still persuade us, that to this Oracle was *the ultimate Appeal in all judicial Causes, by the Establishment of Moses himself.* He finds Fault with me for saying, That "it did not depend on the High-Priest, to give answer by the *Urim* and *Thummim* when he pleased, but depended on the Will of God, who might withhold his Directions by this Oracle, from the Chief Rulers or the People, tho' they applied to him for this purpose*." This does not suit his Scheme, who makes that Oracle nothing else, but the Voice of the *High-Priest* himself, who, consequently had it always in his own Power. And therefore, he denies this, and says I can produce no Authority for it. And whereas I alledged that we have an Instance of this in *Saul*, who could obtain no Answer by *Urim*, tho' he earnestly desired it; he answers, That "it is no wonder, that neither the *Priests* nor *Prophets* would give *Saul* any Advice, when they were all in *David's* Interests; and *Saul* could have no other Way of consulting with God but by them." But this will not do: For one of the Instances wherein *Saul* consulted the Oracle, and could get no Answer, was before *David* was so much as known or thought of for King. The

See *Div. Author.* p. 221.

High-Priest whom *Saul* consulted was in his Interests, according to this Writers own Representation, for he was *Abia* the Son of *Abitub* the Grandson of *Eli*, whom he pretends *Saul* exalted to the High-Priesthood instead of *Samuel*. He was then with *Saul*, and did himself propose consulting God concerning their pursuing the *Philistines*; and it may be gathered from what is said of this Matter, that he would have been glad of a favourable Answer, but could get none at all; which shewed it was not in his Power, nor depended upon his Pleasure. And accordingly *Saul* himself concluded, that some Sin among the People must have been the Cause of it. And what followed plainly shewed, that the with-holding the Answer of the Oracle, could not be owing to the *High-Priest*: For it ended in a Discovery, that *Jonathan* had unwittingly broken the solemn Adjuration or Curse which his Father had laid upon all the People, devoting any of them to Death that should eat any thing till Evening. The High-Priest cannot reasonably be supposed to have known this Fact of *Jonathan's* since none of the People that saw it would discover it, such was their Affection and Esteem for *Jonathan*; nor was it otherwise found out than by casting of Lots. Or, if the High-Priest had known it, it would be absurd to the last Degree, to suppose, that he who was a Friend of *Saul's*, would have thus contrived to promote the Condemnation and Death of his eldest and most beloved Son, the Favourite of his Father and of the People, and to whom the Victory of that Day was principally owing. The whole Affair seems plainly to have been under the immediate Direction of divine Providence, who order'd it so, both to shew the Sacredness of an Oath, and to convince *Saul* of his great Rashness in making such an Adjuration. But here is a plain Instance, that the

Voice

Voice of the Oracle was a different thing from the Voice of the High-Priest, and did not depend upon his Pleasure. See 1 Sam. xiv. 3, 36, 37, &c.

He next comes to the Story of the *Levite* and his Concubine, which he had so basely misrepresented. I considered this fully and distinctly, and he would fain seem to say something to it, but has done little more than repeat what he had said in his former Book, without any new Force of Argument, tho' with a greater Confidence than before.

He had charged the *Levite* and his Wife as having raised a Mob about them, by their ill Behaviour when they came into the Town of *Gibeah*. I had shewn that this was a Fiction of his own, without any thing in the Story to support it. Instead of retracting so groundless a Charge, he still continues to say, That *this is very probable by the Circumstances of the Story*, p. 151. and in the next Page confidently asserts it as if it was a certain Fact, but does not condescend to give the least Proof of it, or to answer what was offered to the contrary. And whereas he had taken upon him to assert, that the Outrage upon the *Levite* and his Wife was committed in the *middle of the Night*, with a View to shew that the *Levite* was carousing till Midnight, and that it could not therefore be known who the Authors of the Outrage were: I shewed that it may be concluded from the Story, that the Outrage happened not long after the *Levite* had gotten into the old *Ephraimite's* House, which was in the Evening. For the old Man found them in the Street, as he was returning from his Work at *Even*, and took them into his House; where after having given Provender to the Asses, they refresh'd themselves, and whilst they were doing so, behold the Men of the City, certain Sons of Belial, beset the House, &c. Now, what does this

this Writer say to this ? He first supposes me to say, that this Outrage happened in *the Evening before Night*, and then sets himself very gravely to prove, that it must have been Night before it happened, p. 152, 153. But if he would have said any thing to the Purpose, he should have proved that it was not till Midnight, which he had taken upon him to assert in his former Book, but this he quietly passes over.

He is pleased to own, that the *Insolence and Rage of the Mob was certainly inexcusable, and the Guilty ought to have received their just punishment, could they have been found out and convicted.*

P. 151. But he falls heavily upon the Levite for not having taken his remedy at Law, which he assures us was open to him; and in which he might have expected the utmost Favour, as the supreme Power of the Nation was in his Tribe. And whereas I had said, there was then no Judge or supreme Magistrate in Israel, to whom he might apply for Redress, and for the Punishment of so enormous an Outrage; he very boldly pronounces, that this is absolutely false, and such a Fiction of my own, that he is astonish'd at it; and he gives us his word for it, that since Phinebas was High-Priest, Othniel or Ehud must have been Judge. I cannot say, that I am astonished at his saying this; but I should have been astonished, if any Writer of Credit or Reputation had said it: for not only does the Historian expressly declare, that there was no King in Israel, and that every Man did that which was right in his own Eyes; which is as plain a Description as can well be given, that there was then no supreme Magistrate in Israel, that had the Power of the Sword; for by the King is sometimes understood any single Person that had the supreme Authority, Deut. xxxiii. 5. But besides, it appears from all the Circumstances of the Story, that there was then no Judge amongst them, or any one Person,

that had the supreme Power, though there was an High-Priest; for we find that every thing was done by the *Elders of the Congregation*, as they are called, or the *Chief of all the People*, or *Heads of the Tribes*; to their Direction and Appointment every thing is ascribed from first to last: Nor is there the least Mention of any one Person to preside over them, or to be their Leader, but they were obliged to consult the Oracle to know *who should go up first*; which they needed not to have done, if there had been at that Time a Judge; whose Office it was to lead and govern them.

There cannot be a more extravagant Supposition than that which this Writer has advanced, That the *Levite* might have had a *Remedy at Law*, if he had sued for it; but that he was resolved to make it a publick, national Quarrel, and to raise a War upon it, rather than take any peaceable legal Method for Redress. P. 150, 153. As if a poor inconsiderable *Levite*, who does not appear to have been a Man of any Note, should form a Project of raising a *Civil War*, when, at the same Time, he might have had Justice done him in a quiet way. Nor is it a less romantick Supposition, that all the Tribes of *Israel* should engage in his Quarrel, when, at the same Time, Justice might have been done, and the Injury redressed in the common legal way. But he insinuates, that it was because he was a *Levite*, that there was such an Interest made, and a War raised, upon his Account; and that it is very plain, from the whole Story, that it was not so much the Injury done, as the Person to whom it was done; that was the great unpardonable Aggravation of the Crime. P. 155. And yet there is not the least Hint of this; though, he says, it is very plain from the whole Story. It is the *Atrociousness* of the Crime it self, that is represented as the Thing which raised so general an Indignation

in the People, and not the least Stress is laid upon its being an Injury done to a *Levite*.

Our Author takes upon him to affirm, with a Confidence peculiar to himself, as if he could certainly prove it, that the Tribe of *Benjamin* were never summoned to come to the Assembly of the People, or to meet the other Tribes while they were debating the Matter; that they never had an Opportunity to confront the *Levite*, or to clear themselves, nor Time to find out and punish the guilty Persons; yea, that none of them durst go, and confront, and contradict the *Levite*, for fear of being put to the Sword. See p. 154, 155. All which are most absurd Suppositions, contrary to all Reason and common Sense; as if the *Israelites* had, from the Beginning, resolved not so much as to hear what the *Benjamites* had to say for themselves, and had vowed the Destruction of a whole Tribe, without giving them Leisure to find out the Criminals, when they were willing to have done it; though it does not appear that the other Tribes, in the Beginning of this Affair, had the least Quarrel or Relentment against the Tribe of *Benjamin*. The *Benjamites* had Notice given them of the Fact it self in the same way that any of the other Tribes knew it; for the *Levite* sent equally to the Twelve Tribes of *Israel*, of which *Benjamin* was one. Nor can it, without great Absurdity, be supposed, that when all the other Tribes were summoned to meet at the general Assembly, the Tribe of *Benjamin* should be neglected, that were most nearly concerned. And besides this, we are expressly told, That the Children of *Benjamin* heard, that is, they were informed, that the Children of *Israel* were gone up to *Mizpeh*, Judges xx. 5. They knew it, but they would not come. Our Author's Gloss upon this is very extraordinary: Yes, says he, they heard their Destruction had been resolved upon

for an accidental Act committed by Night, p. 152. But this is not true; for their Destruction had not been resolved upon. All that they could hear was, that the Tribes had met to consult and advise upon the Matter: And if they had had Intentions to do Justice, or shewed a just Regard to the Authority of the Body of their Nation, it was their Business to have gone too. And if they had shewed a Disposition, as this Author, without any Proof, would persuade us they did, to *find out and punish the Criminals*; no doubt this would have satisfied and been very acceptable to the other Tribes, who shewed, by their whole Proceedings, how loth they were to break with the *Benjamites*, and how glad they would have been to have had them along with them in this Affair. And hence it was, that when the *Benjamites* did not meet the other Tribes at the general Assembly; there was particular Care taken to send special Messengers through all the Tribes of *Benjamin*, to persuade them to do Justice, and to deliver up the Criminals. And when they absolutely refused to do this, the Tribes came to no Resolution at all to destroy the whole Tribe, but only to punish the Inhabitants of *Gibeab* it self, that were immediately concerned in the horrid Outrage. All this is fully proved in the Book this Author pretends to answer*; to which he has nothing to reply, but very wittily would persuade his Reader, that *I am only writing booty, with a Design to betray the Cause I would seem to espouse*, p. 152. And I am persuaded, if this had been the Case, or if this Author had thought so, he would have been much better pleased with me than now he seems to be.

He urges, That it is a *Supposition*, not consistent with common Sense, or even with human Nature

* See Divine Authority, p. 227—231.

that a whole City would chuse rather to be put to the Sword than give up a few infamous Rioters, had they known them; or that the whole Tribe would have joined with them, and supported them in this. P. 154, 155. And again, p. 156. he calls it a wild Supposition, that a whole City and Tribe should chuse utter Destruction rather than make any reasonable Satisfaction, in their power, for the Loss of a single Life; and some Slight shewn to a private Man. P. 156. Let the Reader observe this Author's Manner of expressing himself on this Occasion, and how tenderly he speaks. Their offering first to abuse, in an unnatural Manner, the *Levite* himself, and afterwards abusing and murdering his Wife, was some Slight shewn to him. Thus it is that he is for palliating so enormous a Crime and Outrage. As to his Pretence, that it is absurd to suppose, that the People of *Gibeah*, or Tribe of *Benjamin*, would refuse to give up the Criminals if they had known them; this is directly to contradict the History it self, which assures us, That they did refuse to deliver up the Criminals when demanded, and who undoubtedly were known well enough*. And supposing them to have been Persons of great Interest in *Gibeah*, and that *Gibeah* had a considerable Interest in the rest of the Tribe of *Benjamin*; there is nothing in all this but what is very accountable. It is not indeed to be supposed that they would have done this, if they had foreseen the utter Destruction that this brought upon them, or had known that the whole Tribe would have been cut in pieces and totally extirpated, as this Writer expresseth it. But it doth not appear that they had any Apprehension of this. It is plain, from the Account given of them, that the *Benjamites* were bold and warlike: Our Author himself

* See Divine Authority, p. 229, 230.

says, That they were *the bravest Men and the best Soldiers in Israel*. P. 158. And they might have such an Opinion of their own Skill and Courage, as to think themselves a Match for the other Tribes, whom they, perhaps, regarded as an undisciplined unwarlike Multitude; especially considering the advantageous Situation of *Gibeab*, which was seated on an Eminence, in a mountainous Country. They were in hopes therefore to make them soon weary of the War; and this had like to have been the Case in Fact.

This Writer next proceeds, p. 156, to consider the Part the *Oracle* had in this Affair; which is the main thing he ought to prove. I had shewn that there is not the least Proof, from the whole Story, that the *Oracle* had any Part in any thing that was really wrong or unjustifiable in this Matter. The War it self was undertaken from a noble Principle, and shewed a great deal of national Virtue, and a just Abhorrence of Vice and Wickedness: It was strictly justifiable, as I observed, by the Law of Nature and Nations. Nor has this Author brought any Reason, though a great deal of Noise to the contrary. The utter Destruction of the *Benjamites* and their Cities, that followed the last Battle, was indeed very wrong and unjustifiable; but this was done in the Heat of Blood and Resentment, after the Losses they had sustained; and there is not the least Proof that this was by the Direction of the *Oracle*, or that they consulted the *Oracle* at all about it: On the contrary, the *Elders*, or *Heads of the Tribes*, plainly charged it upon their own Rashness, Chap. xxi. 20. To them also is the Destruction of *Jabesh Gilead* ascribed; who evidently had the Power in their Hands, and the Management of the whole Affair, and not to any Direction from the *Oracle*, whom they did not consult about it. Whatever was wrong therefore in these

these Matters, was not to be charged upon the Oracle, as I plainly shewed *; nor has this Author been able to return any Answer to what was offered on these Heads; yet still goes on to abuse the Oracle, and is resolved that the Oracle shall be charged with every thing that was done from first to last, and to abuse every Body that will not join with him in charging it too.

As to the Question he proposes to me, p. 157. "Whether the Oracle knew before hand that the Tribes, in the two first Attacks, would be repulsed with the Loss of forty thousand Men; and whether he had then thought of the Method he put them in at last, for destroying the whole City by Fire and Sword? If he did not know and consider both these before, he could not be infallible; and if he did, he could not be just." How does this follow? Will he pretend there could be no just Reasons why God should see fit to permit that Slaughter of the *Israelites*, supposing their Cause never so just, except he knows and is able to assign those Reasons? It is very evident, that in the Course of divine Providence, a just Cause is often suffered to be oppressed for a Time; and that wicked Men are often suffered to vanquish those that are much better than themselves. This Author talks, as if, whenever any Army beats another, it is a Declaration of Providence, that the Conquerors are in the right. For he saith, That the great Defeat of the *Israelites*, by the *Benjamites*, seemed to be a plain Indication of Providence, that the Cause of the *Israelites* was not just. P. 157. And he has it over again, in the same Page, That this, one would think, must have been a sufficient Declaration from Providence of the Injustice of their Cause; and at that rate, when they overcame the

* See *Divine Authority*, p. 231—234.

Benjamites in the third Battle, it was a Declaration that their Cause was just, and *Benjamin* in the wrong. So that, according to him, Providence declared the same Cause to be both just and unjust. But will this Author, in good Earnest, undertake to prove, that it is unjust in Providence ever to suffer an Army to be slaughtered that are engaged in a just War, and that have the better Cause; or that God can have no Reasons for permitting this, though we find, in fact, he frequently permits it?

He concludes what he had said about the Affair of the *Benjamite* War, with an Observation that is exactly of a Piece with all the rest, and every way worthy of himself. I had said, That "all this is commonly and justly thought to have happened between the Death of *Josua* and the Elders who survived him, and the Appointment of Judges; the first of whom was *Othniel*." He pronounces, That this is a very peculiar Conceit. But, says he, "there was really no such Interval, nor is it thus commonly thought or supposed, by any learned Man, that I know of, or by any Man acquainted with the present State of Chronology. It is now commonly thought, that the several Intervals of Servitude, mentioned in the Book of *Judges*, must be included in the Reigns of the Judges themselves." P. 159. This Writer could not more effectually expose himself, than by talking at this Rate. To what Purpose is it to talk here of the Intervals of Servitude, being included in the Reigns of the Judges, when, at the Time of this War, the *Israelites* were not in a State of Servitude at all? Sir *John Marshall*, who is one of the principal Authors of the Scheme he mentions, of including the Years of Servitude in the Reigns of the Judges, yet places the War with the *Benjamites* where I placed it, before *Othniel*, the first of the Judges; and, I suppose, he will allow him to have been

been a learned Man, and well acquainted with Chronology. Archbishop *Usher* does the same; and, I suppose, he will be allowed to have been a good Chronologer too*. I might add many more; nor do I know any Chronologer of Reputation, but what is of this Opinion.

He next comes to vindicate what he had said concerning the Order of *academical Prophets*, as he calls them; and, which is pleasant enough, he finds fault with me for supposing, that *Schools of the Prophets were publick Seminaries of Learning, like our Universities and Academies now*; which he pronounces to be a mere *Fiction*. P. 161. But the Fiction is his own; for I never supposed any such thing. I supposed them indeed to be employed in sacred Exercises, in the Knowledges of the *Law* and of *Religion*; and that they were instrumental to instruct the People, who were wont, at stated times, to have recourse to the Prophets for Instruction†. And this Writer himself here supposes the same thing, p. 161. But I never imagined them to be *Professors of Divinity, Law, or Physick*; nor need he use any Arguments to convince me that they were not so: Though he himself, in his former Book, had talked of their being devoted to *Learning, and studying History, Rhetorick, Poetry, and the Knowledge of Nature*. See *Mor. Phil.* Vol. I. p. 282.

He begs Leave to make two Remarks before he enters on a particular Consideration of what I had offered with regard to *Prophecy*. The first is, That he had never denied the punctual circumstantial Accomplishment of some of the Prophecies; and that therefore what I offer on this Head is nothing

* See *Marshall's Canon Chron.* Sæcul. xi. *Usher. Annal. Vet. Testam.* p. mibi 42.

† See *Divine Authority*, p. 237, 238.

to the Argument, so far as he is concerned in it. But I believe any one that considers the Passages I had produced from his former Book, will be of Opinion, that he was very loth to own that the Prophets were very particular and circumstantial in their Prophecies as to Time, Place, Persons, &c. and therefore I thought it proper to produce several plain Instances of such particular and circumstantial Prophecies, and which cannot be accounted for, in the way he pretended to account for them, by mere human Prudence; for he would not allow, that they had the Knowledge of Things future communicated to them in a supernatural way. See *Moral Phil.* Vol. I. p. 288, 289. But however, I accept the Author's present Concession, and undertake to shew, that the Predictions I mentioned were of such a kind, that no human Sagacity could have enabled any Man to foretel them; and that there is no rational Way of accounting for them, but in a Way of supernatural extraordinary Revelation from God himself.

Any one that reads the prophetical Writings, will find that they, every where, exhibit the noblest Notions of the Deity, of his Providence and Perfections, and every where manifest a hearty Concern for the divine Glory, for the Interests of Piety and Virtue, and a Detestation of Vice and Wickedness; that the uniform Tendency of all their Writings, is to promote the Cause of God and real Religion in the World; that, with an impartial Zeal, they reprove the Kings, Princes, Priests, and the Body of the People; though thereby they exposed themselves to great Sufferings and Persecutions. Any one that considers this, cannot but conceive a high Esteem for them as very excellent Persons; filled with a Zeal for Goodness and Righteousness; and when he farther considers that they

professed to be extraordinarily sent of God, and delivered their Messages in his Name, and as what they received by immediate *Inspiration* from him; and that, at the same time, they were enabled, in many Instances, to give *circumstantial* Predictions of future Events, which it was impossible for human Sagacity to foresee, and which could only be known to him who governs the World, whose Eye penetrates through all Ages, &c. This, joined with the other, furnisheth an illustrious Proof of their divine Inspiration and Mission; that they were indeed holy Men of God, who spake as they were *moved by the Holy Ghost*; that therefore the highest Regard is to be paid to the Messages they delivered in his Name; which are to be received, and submitted to, as of divine Authority. It is nothing to the Purpose to insinuate, as this Writer does, *p. 200. That the Devil, or evil Spirits, can foreknow Things that we are ignorant of*; for though we may suppose that, in many Cases, by their greater Sagacity and Experience, they may foresee, and give a much more probable Conjecture at future Events than the wisest of Men; yet there are many of the Predictions uttered by the Prophets, which no evil Spirits can be reasonably supposed to foreknow, except we suppose their Understanding is infinite, and capable of taking in the whole Complexion of Events; and that they have the Government of the World in their Hands, and can order the Affairs of Men according to their Will. But besides this, if we should suppose it in their power to foretel such Events, it is absurd to imagine that they would lend their Assistance to give Authority to those Prophets, and the Messages they delivered in the Name of God; which were all manifestly intended, as has been shewn, to restrain Men from *Idolatry* and *Sin*, and to promote the Cause of *Piety* and *Vertue*

Vertue in the World. This Writer himself, in his Letter to *Eusebius*, p. 61, 62, seems to own, that they might be *immediately inspired by God*, and *supernaturally assisted in the Knowledge of future Events*; but that *this cannot alter the Nature and Tendency of Doctrines*; that *notwithstanding they might be greatly mistaken, and very erroneous in Doctrinals of great Consequence*. But since they delivered their Messages as in the Name, and as by the immediate Authority of God himself, with a *Thus saith the Lord*, it cannot consistently be supposed that God would inspire them, in so many wonderful Instances, with the infallible Knowledge of future Events, to give an Authority to the Messages they delivered in his Name, if those Messages did not indeed proceed from him, but were their own Invention, abusing his sacred Name and Authority: And therefore what they thus delivered under his *Inspiration*, must be to be depended on, if the Word of God be so. And a Succession of such excellent Persons, thus extraordinarily inspired from God, delivering Messages in his Name, all concurring to give an uniform Testimony both to the divine Authority, of the Dispensation they were then under, and to prepare Men for a future Dispensation that was to succeed, must have been of signal Use, and tend to give an illustrious Attestation and Confirmation to both.

But our Author's second Remark, is intended to deprive us of the Advantage we might have hoped to make of his seeming Concession in the first: For he tells us, That "it is very difficult, if not impossible, for us now to distinguish what was really Prophetick in those Writings, from what is barely Historical." His Meaning evidently is, That we cannot now distinguish the original Predictions, as written by the Prophets themselves, from the Additions that were inserted afterwards:

For

For some Persons, when an Event was over, might insert Passages in the prophetical Writings, which seemed to foretel that Event, on purpose that they might pass for Predictions or Prophecies. Thus, notwithstanding the Concession he had made of the Prophets having given circumstantial Predictions of future Events ; yet, according to him, it is impossible to prove that ever they gave such Predictions. But such a loose and general Charge as this proves nothing at all, but the Author's Inclination to destroy the Authority of all Prophecy : which we knew well enough before.

But let us hear what he offers to confirm this. He urges, That " it is well known to the Learned, that most or all of those Books have been revised and altered by After-editors, who took the Liberty to add or supply what they thought fit ; and therefore they might sometimes supply the particular Times and Circumstances in Prophecies, which at first had been delivered only in general." But this is entirely misrepresented. It is true that some learned Persons have been of Opinion, that *Ezra*, and the Men of the great *Synagogue*, who revised the sacred Books after the Return from the *Babylonish Captivity*, and took care for a full and correct Edition of them, did here and there insert some Clauses for the Illustration of some particular Passages in those original Records. They sometimes cast in things by way of Parenthesis, for connecting and illustrating the Text, in order to render the Scriptures more plain and intelligible to the People. Old Names, that were grown obsolete, were sometimes changed for Names that were better known ; and where there were Catalogues or *Genealogies*, something was ad-

* See *Prideaux's Connection*, &c. Part I. Book V. p. 343, 344. and Book VIII. p. 573, 574. 4th Edit.

ded,

ded, in some Cases, to bring them down to their own Times. These Insertions are very few in Numbers, and the Sense will be found compleat without them. I shall not, at present, inquire whether there be a just Foundation for this Supposition; though, as to the Instances of this Kind, produced by the learned Dr. *Prideaux*, I think they are far from proving it, and that they may, without much Difficulty, be otherwise accounted for: But not to insist upon this, I would observe, that something of this kind may be admitted without weakening the Authority of the sacred Writings. And the Revisors might be supposed to insert such Clauses as these, in an intire Consistency with the utmost Veneration for those Writings, and without intending the least Corruption of them. But this is of a quite different Kind from what this Writer here supposes; who insinuates, that the *Editors* of the sacred Books have taken such Liberties, that it is impossible to know what was in those *original Records*. And particularly with regard to the *prophetical Writings*, they have inserted express Predictions relating to particular Times, Persons, and Circumstances, that were not in the Writings of the Prophets themselves. But this must have been by a designed and wilful Corruption, and by forging intire Prophecies after the Event; which is quite a different Thing from what those learned Men suppose, under whose Authority this Writer thinks fit to cover himself. Thus, *e. g.* if all the Predictions in the Prophecies of *Isaiab*, that are express and circumstantial, must be supposed to have been inserted by After-Editors, who revised those Prophecies; they must have taken the most scandalous Liberties, and have forged almost the whole Prophecy. The viith Chapter of *Isaiab*, which contains so particular and express a Prophecy concerning the Destruction of

Ephraim

Epbraim and *Syria*, and fixes the Time for it; and the Account of the *Child* by the Prophets, with the Name of the Child, *Maher-shalal-bas-baz*; and the Reason of it, That before he could say, *Father* or *Mother*, the *Riches* of *Damascus*, and the *Spoil* of *Samaria* should be taken away by the *King* of *Assyria*, *Chap. viii.* His wonderful Prophecy concerning *Babylon*, and its being conquered by the *Medes*, and afterwards brought to a perpetual Desolation, *Chap. xiii.* His Predictions concerning the spoiling of *Moab* within three Years, and of *Kedar* within a Year, *Ch. xvi, xxi.* And concerning the Overthrow of *Tyre*, and its Restoration at the End of seventy Years, *Chap. xxiii.* His whole admirable Prophecy concerning the sudden Destruction of *Sennacherib* and his Army, and the Deliverance of *Jerusalem*, at a Time when there was not the least Likelihood of either, uttered to King *Hezekiah*, who sent to enquire of him concerning it, *Chap. xxxvii.* The whole Account of his foretelling *Hezekiah's* Recovery, and that *fifteen Years* should be added to his Life, *Chap. xxxviii.* And his Prophecy that King *Hezekiah's* Treasures, and his Posterity, should be carried to *Babylon*, so many Years before it happened, and when there was not the least Prospect of such an Event, *Chap. xxxix.* All that is foretold concerning *Cyrus*, and the Restoration of the *Jews* by him, with the noble Triumphs made on this Occasion, over all the *Heathen Deities*, as unable to foretel Things to come; in the *xlth* and several other Chapters. All these things, that is, a great Part of the Book must have been forged and inserted afterwards. I might observe the same thing with regard to the Prophecies of *Jeremiah*; a large Part of his Book, particularly the *xxvth*, *xxviiith*, *xxviiiith*, *xxixth*, *xlivth*, *xlviith*, *xlivth*, *xlivth*, *xlivth*, *lth*, and *lith* Chapters; all which contain several admirable

able and circumstantial Predictions of future Events, relating to particular Persons by *Name*, and to the *Fates* of Nations, of *Judea*, *Babylon*, *Egypt*, and other Countries, &c. must, upon this Author's Scheme, have been added by the Editors. And the same thing might be said with regard to others of the Prophets, especially *Daniel*. All the six last Chapters of that Book, and most of the former, must have been one intire Forgery. And indeed, I think, he had better have carried his Supposition a little farther, and have supposed the After-editors, as he calls them, to have forged the *Whole*, and put an intire *new* Body of Prophecies upon the World, under the Names of the ancient Prophets. And yet even this would not answer his End. For let him assign what Time he pleases to those Editors, I will still undertake to prove, that there are several Passages in those Prophecies, that contain Predictions concerning Events that happened *after* their Time, and which it was impossible for any human Sagacity to foresee.

But the Truth is, his Supposition is the most wild and arbitrary in the World: It is perfectly unreasonable, and has nothing to support it, but a determined Resolution not to believe. For first, there is no Reason to think that the Editors had it in their *Power* to have corrupted the prophetic Books in the Manner he supposes, if they had an Inclination to do it. Though the Prophets had, many of them, been treated very ill by the Princes and People of the *Jews*, in their Life-time, for their impartial rebuking them for their Sins and Vices, and on the Account of their foretelling the Calamities that should befall them; yet afterwards there Characters were had in a profound Esteem and Veneration by the whole Nation, because they found their Predictions had been punctually accomplished, and they were convinced that they

they were indeed excellent Persons, who had been extraordinarily inspired of God. They themselves committed their own Prophecies to writing; and they were looked upon as sacred, and preserved with care. The Vision of *Isaiah*, the Son of *Amoz*, is cited in the second Book of *Chronicles*, Chap. xxxii. 32. and appealed to as a Book well known and in use. *Jeremiab*, by divine Command, published all his own Prophecies in his Life-time; and when the *Roll*, in which they were written, was burnt, *Baruch* was ordered to write them from *Jeremiab's* Mouth a second time. See *Jer.* xxxvi. 2, 4, 32. xlv. 1. Besides which, several of his Prophecies were expressly sent by him from *Judea*, to those of the *Jews*, who were then dwelling at *Babylon*. See particularly *Ch.* xxiv. li. What was said to *Habbakkuk*, Chap. ii. 2. was equally the divine Command to the other Prophets; *Write the Vision*. And these Writings were spread among the *Jews*; and they would be the more careful to preserve them, especially in the time of their Captivity, as they contained Predictions in which they had a near Concern. Particularly, it appears from *Daniel* ix. 2. That he had *Jeremiab's* Prophecies in his hands, and carefully perused them. The Veneration that was universally had for the Prophets, from the time of their Return from the *Babylonish Captivity*, appears from the publick solemn Confession made in the Name of all the People, when they were assembled together. *Neh.* ix. 30. where they confess that God had testified against them, by his Spirit, in the Prophets; and acknowledge it as their great Guilt, that they had not hearkened to them. When therefore *Ezra* set himself to restore and settle the *Jewish* State, by Commission from *Artaxerxes*, and to put every thing on a proper footing, the Writings of the Prophets were not new things, but Writings that

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were already known, and to which there was paid a great regard. And therefore he could not have mangled and interpolated the Prophetical Writings, to so strange a degree as this Writer must suppose upon his Scheme, but the Forgery and Corruption must have been detected and exposed; especially considering that *Ezra* had Enemies, and met with considerable Opposition in his intended Reformation, even from several of the Priests. And any others that succeeded *Ezra* would have found it still more difficult to have altered and corrupted those sacred Books, and to have imposed them upon the *Jews*, both in *Judea* and throughout the *Eastern Provinces*, for the true uncorrupted Writings of the Prophets.

But besides it cannot reasonably be supposed, either that *Ezra*, or the Men of the great Synagogue, could have been capable of a Conduct so little reconcilable to *Truth* and *Honesty*. *Ezra*, by all the Accounts we have of him, and by the honourable Testimony given of him by the King of *Persia* himself, was a Person of an excellent Character, and has accordingly been regarded by the whole Nation ever since, with the highest Esteem. The Men of the great Synagogue were Persons of *Eminence* and *Worth*, and who had too great a Veneration for the sacred Writings, to be guilty of such deliberate Forgery. Or if they were capable of such a Design, it cannot be conceived what *Inducement* they could have to attempt it. The Prophetical Writings make a disadvantageous Representation of the *Jews*, whose great Corruption and Degeneracy, and particularly the Corruption of the Priesthood, is there described in the strongest Colours. The Faults of Kings, Princes, Priests, and People, are impartially related: The Folly of relying upon Sacrifices, and other ritual parts of Religion, to the Neglect of substantial Piety

and Righteousness, is strongly represented. The Rejection of the *Jews* is foretold, and the Calling of the *Gentiles*. It is plainly intimated, that the Mosaical Oeconomy should be abolished, and a new Dispensation introduced. Can it be thought that *Ezra*, who was a Priest, and the Men of the great *Synagogue*, who were many of them Priests, would have taken such pains to forge a great number of Passages, containing express circumstantial Predictions, on purpose to strengthen the Authority of Writings, which were far from giving an advantageous Idea, either of their Priesthood or of their Nation; and which were in many Instances contrary to the favourite Prejudices and Expectations of the People, as well as to what might be supposed to be the particular Interests of the Priests? It might rather have been concluded, that if they durst have presumed to lay their sacrilegious Hands upon those sacred Writings, they would have corrupted and interpolated them in *favour* of their own Interests and Prejudices, and struck out those Passages that had a contrary Aspect; which yet we find they have not done.

Our Author, in order to throw a Slur upon the Prophets, had confounded the *true* Prophets of the Lord with the *false* ones. In opposition to which, I observed the remarkable Difference the Scripture puts between the one and the other; and that no Argument can be brought from the false Prophets to the prejudice of the true. But he still persists in it, that the one of these were as truly Prophets of God as the other. He urges, that "the Prophets were a regular fixed Society, instituted by *Sa-*
" *muel*, who were to subsist and hold together by
" their own Laws and Constitution, as the Priest-
" hood had been instituted by *Moses*; and while
" they continued in the same Society and Order,
" without being deposed or expelled by their own

“ Laws and original Constitutions, they were true
 “ Prophets, or Prophets of the Lord, as well as
 “ the Priests were Priests of the Lord, though yet
 “ either the one or the other might be very bad
 “ men, p. 164, 165.” And he talks to the same
 purpose again, p. 205. But the Parallel he men-
 tions will not hold. For as to the Priesthood, all
 that was necessary by the *Mosaical* Law to deno-
 minate a Man a Priest, was, that he should be of
 the *Order* and *Family* of *Aaron*. Those that were
 of that Family were Priests of course, and no o-
 thers were admitted to be so. But there is no Law
 or Constitution, that all that were in what he calls
 the *Prophetical Colleges*, should be of course re-
 garded as the Prophets of the Lord; and that no
 other were to be accounted as such. I wish he had
 been pleased to tell us where we are to find the
Laws and *Constitutions* of the Prophetical Society
 that he talks of. The utmost that can be gathered
 from the Accounts given us in Scripture, concern-
 ing those Prophetical *Schools* or *Colleges*, is no more
 than this, that there were sacred Societies gathered
 together under the direction of one or more Pro-
 phets eminently so called, where Persons were em-
 ployed in sacred Exercises; and that to these pro-
 bably the People had recourse for Instruction. And
 I observed, that the Name of *Prophets* might be
 sometimes ascribed in a larger Sense to those that
 abode in those sacred Societies, though they did not
 pretend to extraordinary Inspiration; as the Word
Prophecy is also sometimes taken in a large Sense,
 where no Inspiration is intended. But if we speak
 of *Prophets* in the strict and proper Sense, as Per-
 sons professing to be extraordinary inspired of God,
 it doth not appear, that there was any Society or
College, in which all that belonged to it, or were
 governed by the Rules of it, were of course to be
 regarded as true Prophets of the Lord; as much
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and as properly as all of *Aaron's* Family were to be regarded as Priests. This is the Author's own Imagination, and of which he is not able to produce the least Proof: For though it might well be, that some of those that were prepared and educated in those sacred Seminaries might become *Prophets* in the strict Sense, yet neither all that were thus educated were Prophets, nor was it judged necessary to be in those Seminaries, in order to Persons being accounted true Prophets of the Lord; of which several Instances might be given, and our Author himself owns it. No Man was esteemed a Prophet in the proper Sense, except he was looked upon to be extraordinarily inspired of God. And if he was regarded as thus inspired, he was looked upon as a Prophet, whether he belonged to these Colleges or not. He that really was inspired and sent of God, was a *true* Prophet of the Lord; and he that only falsely pretended to Inspiration was a *false* Prophet. It will be easily acknowledged, that there were many such false *Pretenders* to Prophecy among the *Jews*. And if this Writer can prove, that any of the Prophets whose Writings we admit as of divine Authority were such, he will say something to the purpose; otherwise it is no prejudice at all to the Authority of the true Prophets of the Lord, that there were false Pretenders to Inspiration. Concerning these, it is often expressly declared, that God did not *send them*, nor *speak by them*. That he gave them no *Command*, and that they *propheesied a false Vision*, and the *Deceit of their own Heart*. Such were *Abab's* 400 Prophets, who were called *Abab's Prophets*, not merely because they were his Subjects, as he is pleased to represent it; but because they were the *Court Prophets*, Prophets not of God's sending, but of *Abab's* chusing; and who made it their Business to attend and flatter the Court, and prophesy whatever they thought would please the King.

This Writer indeed seems surprized that I have the Front to say, that the 400 Prophets who prophesied falsely, were not Prophets of the Lord, and that if I credit the Historian, I must see, that they were Prophets of the Lord, and that the Lord himself in this Case did deceive them, by sending out a lying Spirit among them, with a Commission to give them a false Vision for the Destruction of Ahab, p. 204, 205. But all that can be gathered from the Account the Historian gives of them is, that they pretended to be true Prophets of the Lord, but were not so. And as to the Parabolical Vision of the Prophet Micah, who is plainly distinguished from those pretended Prophets, and opposed to them, tho' every Expression and Circumstance in Representations of this kind, is not to be strained to the utmost Vigour; yet the general Design is plain, which is to signify, that they were false Prophets acted by a lying Spirit, and that God suffered Ahab to be given up to their Delusions, as a just Punishment on him for his Crimes. * After all, it is not such Prophets as these that our Moral Philosopher bends his Invectives against, and reproaches with so much Bitterness. It is not the Prophets that caressed and flattered

* As to what this Writer talks of its being an established Maxim among them, that if a Prophet was deceived, the Lord deceived that Prophet. I suppose he refers to that Passage, Ezek. xiv. 9. which evidently relates to the false Prophets, that prophesied Lies in the Name of God, concerning whom he had been speaking throughout the whole preceding Chapter. And it is manifest, that the Intention of those Expressions was not to signify, that God himself inspired those Prophets with the lying Messages they delivered in his Name. For this he expressly disclaims. He declares, that he did not send them, and had not spoken to them, and that they prophesied out of their own Heart, and followed their own Spirit, Chap. xiii. 2, 3, 6, 7. See also Jer. xiv. 13, 14. The only Sense therefore, that these Words are capable of, is, that he gave up these false Prophets to their own Delusions, or permitted evil Spirits to seduce them, as a just Punishment for their Wickedness, and for the Wickedness of the

the King and People that prophesied smooth things, and talked of nothing but Peace and Prosperity to them, whilst they were going on in their wicked Courses. These are not the Prophets whom he represents as publick *Incentivaries*, the Plagues and Enemies of their Country: but it is the *true* Prophets of the Lord, against whom he manifests such an envenomed Spite and Malice; those, who with a noble impartial Zeal and Freedom reproved the *Idolatryes*, and other Faults and Vices of the Kings, Priests, false Prophets and People, and delivered the Messages they received from God, without regard to their own Interest.

As to what he insinuates, that the People had no way of *distinguishing* between the true Prophets and the false ones, I shewed, that there were remarkable Characters whereby they might be easily distinguished. And tho' the Princes and People did not pay that just Regard to the true Prophets of the Lord that they ought to have done; it was not that they were not convinced in their Consciences, that they were true Prophets sent from God, but it was because they were strongly addicted to their Vices, and could not bear their impartial Reproofs, and liked those best that soothed and flattered them. With regard to the Case the Author puts concerning *Honaniab* and *Jeremiab*, who *prophesied vehemently one against the other, and declared in the Name of the Lord quite contrary Things*, p. 166, the King and People needed not to have been so much at a Loss as he represents it. For when *Je-*

the People who refused to hearken to the Admonitions of the true Prophets, and followed the false Ones, only because they flattered and countenanced them in their Vices. So the Apostle *Paul* speaking of those that *received not the Love of the Truth that they might be saved*, saith, that God would send them *strong Delusions that they should believe a Lye*, 2 Thes. ii. 10, 11. See concerning this *Answer to Christianity*, &c. Vol. 2d p. 369.

Jeremiah denounced against *Hananiah*, that that very Year he should die, because he had taught Rebellion against the Lord; which was accordingly accomplished, for he died that Year in the seventh Month; this and other things might have convinced them, that *Jeremiah* was a true Prophet of the Lord, and should have engaged them to attend to his pathetic Warnings, and the solemn Messages he delivered to them in the Name of God.

This Writer had expressly charged the Prophets, as being the Authors of all the Insurrections and Commotions in the Kingdom of *Israel* for three hundred Years. He enters upon a Vindication of what he had offered on this Subject, with observing p. 166, 167. That the Quarrel between him and me is, because he cannot believe the Infallibility of the Hebrew Historians. Whereas this is not the present Question between us at all. But what I blame him for is, because he pretends, from those very Historians, to charge the Prophets with all the Confusions and Distractions of the State, directly contrary to plain Truth and Fact. Whether he supposes those Historians fallible or not, he ought not to represent them as saying things which they never said, and after feigning History and Facts out of his own Brain, to put it upon the Reader, that he has the Hebrew Historians for his Vouchers.

He attempts, p. 168, &c. to vindicate what he had said concerning *Saul's* being obliged by *Samuel* to lead a private Life twenty Years at least, after his first Inauguration at *Mizpeh*. He assures his Reader, that he had confirmed this by Circumstances of the History which I could not answer. And if the Reader will take his Word for this, it is well; but if he will judge for himself, and compare what our Author had said in his former Book, p. 294, with the Answer I returned, *Divine Author*, p. 266, 267. he will find that this is as true, as this Writers

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confident Assertions generally are. It was not a wise thing in him to put the Reader in mind of this Matter at all, except he could have offered something more to the Purpose, than now he has been able to do. But that he may seem to say something, he represents me as laying a great Stress upon the Chronology of *Josephus*, and then sets himself to prove, that his Chronology is not much to be depended upon; whereas it was he that had laid a Stress upon *Josephus's* Testimony, and I had no farther occasion to mention it than to shew, that if he governed himself by *Josephus's* Authority it was against him. As to what he now adds, that we hear nothing of *Samuel's* great Age when *Saul* was first anointed King; whereas when he was confirmed in his Kingdom at *Gilgal*, he represents himself as grown very old; it is certain, that before *Saul* was anointed King at all, *Samuel* is represented as old, and therefore taking his Sons to assist him in administering Justice to the People; 1 Sam. viii. 1, 5. and how long he lived afterwards, or how old he was when he died, we cannot tell. *Eli* who was Judge before him, lived till he was near an Hundred Years old.

He enters next upon a Digression concerning the Revenues of the High-Priest, and the great Court he kept, which he assures us, *was more splendid and numerous than any Prince in the World had*; and that therefore it was impossible, *that any other publick, splendid or numerous Court should be kept by any Revenues from the People, without seizing upon, and detaining a considerable Part of the legal Rights and Dues of the Priesthood.* And that *Saul* accordingly took a great Part of those Revenues to support his own Court, &c. p. 171, 172. This all proceeds upon the Supposition of the Truth of what he had advanced before: That the Legal Priesthood had above twenty Shillings in the Pound upon all

all the Lands of *Israel*. But as this is his own Fiction, what he here builds upon it falls to the Ground. It appears from what has been before observed, that as the *Israelites*, by their original Constitution, had each of them Lands of Inheritance, which they occupied, and had no proper Landlords to whom they were to pay Rent; even supposing them to have paid an annual Rent to the Priests, as much as those in other Nations pay their Landlords, which is the Author's Supposition, they might still have it in their Power to pay Taxes to their Kings, as well as People in other Countries both pay Rents to their Landlords, and many Taxes to the State, besides Dues to the Priests. But this was not the Case: The Revenues of the Priests under the Law fell vastly short of this Writer's Computation as I have shewn. And the People might pay Taxes sufficient to support the Expence and Grandeur of the King's Court, and pay all the legal Dues to the Priests too, without being impoverished more than other Nations. And as Kings were their own Choice, if it brought an additional Burden upon them, more than what was laid upon them by their Original Constitution, they had no body to blame but themselves; and it must be supposed were willing to support it, since they were warned of the Expence, when they first entered on that Form of Government.

As to what he saith, p. 173, 174. concerning *Solomon's dispensing with the People's paying Sacrifices and other Church Dues, because they were not able to support the Expence, and pay the Taxes to the Crown;* and that this raised the Priests against him with whom the Prophets conspired; and that after his Death, the Ten Tribes revolted from *Reboboam*, because he would not promise or secure to them an Exemption from the Burden of the legal Bribehood: it is all pure Fiction and Romance,

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without any thing from the History to support it; Yea it is directly *contrary* to the History, which informs us, that what the People complained of, was the Load of Taxes and Impositions *Solomon* had laid upon them, which they wanted to be taken off or mitigated. Whereas, according to this faithful Relater, it was not the Taxes *Solomon* had laid upon them that was the cause of their Complaint. On the contrary, *Solomon* had eased them of the Burden they groaned under, which was that of the Church Dues and legal Priesthood; and all that they desired of *Rehoboam* was, only to be continued in the same Exemption from this Burden in which *Solomon* had indulged them. And is not this a very fit Man to be trusted in his Representation of Facts, that can thus at pleasure deny the Account given in the History, and forge a quite contrary one; and that with as much Confidence, as if it were certainly true, and he could produce authentick Memoirs for it?

He had said, *Mor. Phil.* Vol. I. p. 295. that it is plain from the History, that *Samuel* had taken upon him the Priesthood, and had usurped it from the Family of *Eli*. In Answer to which, it was observed, that this is his own Imagination, and that there is not one Word in the whole History to support it. Nor can I conceive how *Samuel* could make such a solemn Appeal as he did to the whole Nation, that he had wronged and defrauded no Man, if he had wronged the Family of *Eli* of the High Priesthood, and usurped it for many Years, when it did not belong to him. But our Author is resolved still to persist in his Charge, and after some Observations upon *false Glasses* and *Spectacles*, refers me to several Texts, which he desires me to consult, viz. 1 Sam. vii. 9. ix. 12. x. 8. xi. 14, 15. I have consulted them, and find not one Word about *Samuel's* High-Priesthood, except his offering Sacrifices

fices be allowed as a Proof of it, which any of the other Priests could have done as well as the High-Priest. Nor can it be proved, that he himself personally officiated in offering those Sacrifices *, but only that they were offered in his Presence, and by his Order. So we find it is afterwards said of *Saul*, that he offered Sacrifices, and of *David*, and of *Solomon*, and other Kings that they offered Sacrifices tho' they did not do it in Person, but did it by the Hand of the Priests who attended them; and for any thing this Writer can prove, it might be so with *Samuel* too: For it doth not so much as appear, that he was a Priest, or of the Family of *Aaron*; rather it may be gathered from 1 *Cbron.* vi. 33, 34, that he was of one of the Families of the common *Levites*. And the great Eminency he bore in presiding in the publick Solemnities, which this Author urges, was wholly owing to his being an eminent *Prophet*, and to his having exercised the Office of Judge of *Israel*, which was a distinct thing from the *High Priesthood*; nor had there been any one of the whole Number of Judges that was an High Priest, except *Eli*.

He passes over all he had farther said to defame *Samuel*, with only observing, that it was what might naturally be concluded from the History, tho' I shewed that the very contrary appears from it; and then proceeds to his favorite Subject, a Declamation against *David*, whom he had before represented under the most odious Character possible; and now, instead of retracting any part of the infamous Reproach he had thrown upon that great Prince, abuses him in a more outrageous manner than before.

I had shewn in my former Book, that *David's* Conduct towards *Saul* was incomparably noble,

* 1 Sam. xiii. 9, 10. 2 Sam. vi. 17. xv. 12. xxiv. 25. 1 Kings iii. 15. viii. 62, 63, 64.

loyal, and virtuous, and such as tendeth to form in every impartial Mind a high Idea of his eminent Virtues, and of the generous and excellent Disposition of his Soul. This Author, without troubling himself to answer what was alledged to prove this, continues to charge him with *Rebellion* and *Treason*, as he had done before. He first accuses him for having got some Persons about him for his Defence, tho' as *Grotius* observes, he never did this till he found by many certain Proofs, and by the Advice of *Saul's* own Son *Jonathan*, that that Prince was absolutely determined to destroy him; and, which is highly to his Honour, when he had got that Band of Men with him, never committed the least Act of Violence against his King, or Country. And then he blames him for flying to the *Philistines*, when he should rather have found Fault with *Saul* for having by his continual Persecutions forced him to abandon his Country. And there could not be a greater Proof of the extreme Distress he was reduced to, by the cruel Rage and Jealousy of *Saul*, than that he was obliged to commit himself to the Mercy of open Enemies, to whom he had done great Mischief, and among whom he run the utmost Hazard of his Life. It in that dangerous Situation he did things thro' Fear that were unjustifiable, a candid Mind would have pitied the Distress he was reduced to, and have made Allowances for the Frailty of human Nature in such Circumstances. But every Fault of *David*, with this Writer, is a Proof of the most determined Villany and Hypocrisy. His Dissimulation with *Achish*, King of the *Philistines*, is exaggerated to the highest Degree. He represents him as having destroyed all the South Coasts of *Philistia*, when at the same time he pretended to King *Achish*, that he had made an inroad on the South of *Judah*. But this is not fairly represented. The Nations
David

David invaded were the *Geshurites*, and *Gezerites* (who were both of them, as *Grotius* shews, Reliques of the ancient *Canaanites*) and the *Amalekites*; and these Nations really lay to the South of *Judah*: So that when *David* said he had made an Inroad against the South of *Judah*, and against the South of the *Jerahmeelites*, and against the South of the *Kenites*, he said nothing but what was true; for he had invaded the Nations that lay to the South of these; tho' no doubt *Achish* understood him, that he had invaded the Land of *Judea* it self, and *David* was willing that he should understand it so. See 1 Sam. xxvii. 8, 9, 10. If *David* had been a *Roman Hero*, and his Actions had fallen into the Hands of their eloquent Historians, I doubt not high Encomiums would have been bestowed on his eminent *Patriotism* and Love to his Country, even when he was banished from it; that no Resentment for the unjust and barbarous Treatment he had met with, nor even the Necessity he seemed to be then under to please those among whom he resided, and whose Protection he sought, could prevail with him to turn his Arms against his Country.

He goes on to assure us, that the *Philistines* now thought themselves pretty sure of *David*, and represents him as having prevailed with them to raise a mighty Army against *Israel*; as if their raising an Army was owing to his Sollicitations and Interest; (of which there is not the least Hint in the whole Account, but the Author's Malice against *David*, must in this and other Instances pass for Proof) and yet in the same breath he declares, that the *Philistines* would not trust him, and blamed *Achish* for his good Opinion of this artful Fugitive, p. 178. And then, after informing us of an Interview between *David* and *Jonathan*, a few Days before the last Battle; tho' the last Interview between them that the History informs us of was at least two Years

Years before; see 1 Sam. xxiii. 17, 18. And after most absurdly insinuating that *David* sent *Jonathan* into the Army to be killed in Battle, as if that brave Person *Jonathan* was of so mean a Spirit, that he would not have gone to the Army to assist his Father and his Country, if *David* had not put him upon it; he very pertinently observes, that *this Conduct towards Jonathan* (tho' nothing appears but what was noble and generous on both Sides) gives one a true Idea of the Sanctity and Fidelity of *this divine Hypocrite*. And I may much more justly say, that this Way of representing things, gives one a true Idea of the Candour and Integrity of this Writer.

He next comes to what he calls *another Instance of his deep and most detestable Hypocrisy*, p. 179. and that is, his ordering the Messenger to be slain, who brought him the News of the Death of *Saul* and *Jonathan*; and who, according to our Author might have expected a vast Reward. And I am persuaded, if *David* had either rewarded him, or not punished him, he would have turned this also to *David's* Prejudice, and made it the Matter of a bitter Accusation against him. This Fellow had expressly avowed, that he himself had killed *Saul*. He that declared this was an *Amalekite*, i. e. of a Nation that were great Enemies to *Saul*. And might it not naturally be supposed, that an *Amalekite* might, in the Distress *Saul* was in, take the opportunity to kill him, both in Revenge for the Slaughter of his Countrymen, and in hopes to get a Reward from *David*, whom he knew *Saul* had used very ill? His pretending that this was at *Saul's* own Request, was to pass for nothing, and could not be admitted as any Plea. It might have been imagined, that *Saul* might have lived, tho' sore wounded, and have escaped out of the Battle; since according to the Relation the *Amalekite* him-

self gave, *Saul* declared, *that his Life was yet whole within him*; see 2 *Sam.* i. 9. His own Armour-bearer refused to kill him, 1 *Sam.* xxxi. 4. And yet this *Amalekite* pretended he did it. It is true, this Pretence was false; for it appears from 1 *Sam.* xxx. 4, 5. that *Saul* killed himself, when his Armour-bearer refused to do it: but this *Amalekite* by charging himself with it, and bringing the *Crown that was on Saul's Head, and the Bracelets that were on his Arms* to *David*, v. 10. justly brought his own Punishment and Death upon himself: And if *David* had not ordered him to be slain, this Writer would, I doubt not, have pretended that *David* had hired this *Amalekite* to kill *Saul* treacherously, whilst he was engaged in the Battle, and wounded, and hard pressed by the Enemy.

Our Author next, takes notice of *David's* pathetick Lamentation over *Saul* and *Jonatban*. And after repeating it, he exclaims, *O Heavens! is human Nature capable of such Depths of Deceit?* It seems this Writer is such a Stranger to all Generosity of Mind, that he had no Notion of doing Justice to an Enemy. Far from this, he can allow himself to vilify and abuse the brightest Characters. But *David* was of a nobler Soul; and tho' *Saul* had acted a vey unjust Part towards him, yet he could do him the Justice to acknowledge, that he had been a brave and valiant Prince, of great Courage and Military Skill, and who had been successful against the Enemies of his Country. This was what he celebrated in his pathetical Lamentation.

So desirous is this Writer of finding Fault with *David*, that he turns even his *Virtues* to his Prejudice. His refusing to kill *Saul*, who, with an unwearied Malice and Industry was pursuing after him to take his Life, when Providence had so ordered it, that he had it twice in his power to have slain him,

him, and was urged to it by those about him ; even this is turned to his Disadvantage. *Saul* himself, prejudiced as he was against *David*, and jealous of him to the highest degree, yet was touched with it, and regarded it as a manifest Proof of his noble and generous Soul, and of the Uprightness of his Intentions. But it seems *Saul* did not know the Circumstances of the Case, and was not wise enough to discern what this Writer, at the distance of 3000 Years, is perfectly well acquainted with, that if *David* did not take that opportunity to kill him, it was merely because he durst not do it ; and because it would have hinder'd the Design he had of coming to the Crown. At this rate it is easy to vilify the most generous Actions in the World : It is only to attribute them, without Proof, to some base and sinister View ; and then the most glorious and heroick Actions must pass for Crimes, or at least lose all their Praise. But the World is generally so just in these Cases, as to turn it to the Disadvantage of the impotent Censurer, who proves nothing by it, but the Malignity of his own Mind. The manner in which he concludes his Reflections upon this part of *David's* Conduct, is remarkable. He assures us, *p. 222.* That *David* only waited for an opportunity to cut *Saul's* Throat ; when the Story itself is the strongest Proof to the contrary ; and then utters this benevolent and decent Wish, *Away with him to the Devil, from whence he came.* If this Writer had been hired to expose himself, he could not have done it more effectually.

He next blames *David*, as if the War he maintained against *Ishbosheth* after *Saul's* Death, was a Breach of the Oath he had made to *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* xxiv. 20, 21. Whereas, in that very Oath, *Saul* supposed, that *David* was surely to be King, and that the Kingdom of *Israel* was to be established in his Hand. And therefore *David* securing himself in it, after

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Saul's

Saul's Death, was no Breach of that Oath. And besides, it appears, that that War was carried on by the Interest and Ambition of *Abner*, against the Consent and Desire of the Body of the People, who were for *David's* being their King. Vast Numbers from all the Tribes came to join him, immediately after *Saul's* Death, and continued still to do so till the Death of *Ishbosheth*, which *David* was so far from encouraging, that he *slew* the Authors of it. *David's* giving up *Saul's* Sons to the *Gibeonites* to be put to death, is also produced as a manifest Proof of his Cruelty and Treachery, and as a Breach of his Oath to *Saul*. He will have it, that this was only done by Consent between *David* and the *Gibeonites*; and that the Pretence of the Oracle, and the Name of God, was all Artifice and Falshood. But if *David's* giving up *Saul's* Sons to the *Gibeonites*, was by the Direction of God himself, in a way of just Retaliation for the great Cruelty and Inhumanity *Saul* had exercised towards that poor People, many of whom he had slain, and whom he probably intended to have extirpated; and that in Violation of the most solemn Covenant, in which the *Faith* of the Nation had been engaged; I can see no fault at all to be charged upon *David*, except Obedience to God be so. And this is the Representation made of it in the sacred History. Nor is there any thing in this Proceeding, unworthy of the Wisdom and Goodness of God, as the wise and righteous *Governour* of the World, who took this Way to exhibit an illustrious Declaration and Monument to all Ages of his Displeasure, against such a signal Act of Perjury and Cruelty, and a Breach of a national Covenant. Nor is there the least likelihood that *David* would have done this of himself. Those Children of *Saul* were in a private Station, not capable of giving him any Umbrage. This happened probably many Years after

after his coming to the Crown, and when he was entirely established; besides *Mephibosheth* was spared, who was the Son of *Jonathan*, *Saul's* eldest and best beloved Son; and who upon that Account must be supposed to have had greater Interest with the People, and to have it more in his power to distress *David*, than any other of *Saul's* Descendants; so that it is plain *David* did not act in this Matter, from the base Views which this Writer imputes to him.

But his Conduct towards *Mephibosheth* next falls under our Author's Censure. It cannot be denied, that *David* had shewn him great kindness; he had given him *all that pertained to Saul and to all his House*, 2 Sam. ix. 9. And had treated him for many Years with particular Marks of Distinction, as might be expected towards the Son of one for whom he had so great an Affection and Esteem. But it is here urged against him, as the highest Instance of *Ingratitude and Cruelty*, that he hearkened to the Calumnies of *Ziba*, who had charged *Mephibosheth* as joining in *Absalom's* Rebellion, and gave him *Mephibosheth's* whole Estate; and afterwards when he was informed by *Mephibosheth* of *Ziba's* Perfidy, still ordered the Land to be divided between them, so that *Ziba* was to have one half of it. As to *David's* hearkening to *Ziba* at first, the Story was so artfully contrived, that it was sufficient to gain Credit in the Circumstances *David* was then in. And the readiness *Ziba* shewed to serve him in his Distress, and the ample and seasonable Relief he brought him when he was in great Want, and at a Time when so many of those, that had pretended to be his best Friends had forsaken him, certainly deserved a very signal Acknowledgment and Reward from *David*. And, perhaps, he was so prejudiced in his Favour, by the Readiness he shewed to serve him both then, and

afterwards, 2 Sam. xix. 17. that he might still think there was some Truth in the Story he told him; and therefore ordered him half the Estate, tho' he would not give him the whole, as he at first designed. But the Account the learned *Selden* gives of this Matter, entirely takes away the very Foundation of our Author's Calumnies. When *David* said to *Mephibosheth*, 1 Sam. xix. 29. *Why speakest thou any more of thy Matters? I have said, thou and Ziba divide the Land*; the meaning of it is not, as if *David* had determined, that *Ziba* was to have one half of the Estate in full Property as Lord of it, and *Mephibosheth* the other; but he refers to the Appointment he had made before, 1 Sam. ix. 10, 11. according to which *Mephibosheth* was to be the proper Lord and *Proprietor* of the Land, but *Ziba* was to manage it for him; and as he was to bring in the Fruits or Product of the Land to *Mephibosheth*, so he himself and his fifteen Sons and twenty Servants were to live upon it, and to be maintained out of it. So that it is as if he had said, Thou needest say no more to me about thy Affairs, or make any more Apologies; what I have formerly pronounced and determined shall stand good; *I have said it*, and I will abide by it, Thou shalt have the Land in Property; and I have appointed *Ziba* and his Family to take care of it for thee, and to be maintained out of it, and have share of the Profits. And then the Sense of *Mephibosheth's* Answer, *Nay, let him take all, seeing my Lord, the King, is come home in Peace*, is this; let him have the whole Land in Property; I am content, since the King, that has been so kind to me, and to whom I am so much obliged, is returned in Safety and Prosperity. See *Selden de Success. in bona defuncti. cap. 25. ad finem.*

As to what our Author adds p. 185. *That David barely spared Mephibosheth's Life, after he had*

had stript him of all, and put him out of a Condition ever to marry, or settle any Dowry: This is false, even upon his own Representation of the Case; since *Mephibosheth* by his own Acknowledgment had one half of the Estate allowed him, which probably was very considerable. And it is certain, that *Mephibosheth* did marry; and a particular Account is given of his Descendents, a numerous Progeny, in which the Line and Family of *Saul* was preserved, compare 2 *Sam.* ix. 12. with 1 *Chron.* viii. 34 — 40. Where the Line of *Saul's* House is carried down many Generations. So that *David* kept his Oath to *Saul*, who had obliged him to swear, that he would not cut off his, *Saul's*, Name out of his Father's House, 1 *Sam.* xxiv. 21, 22.

If this Writer had any regard to Decency or his own Reputation, he would have taken care not to put the Reader in mind, of what he had said, concerning *David's* dancing naked before the Ark; yet he now repeats it with greater Confidence than before, p. 185, 186. This whole Matter was so particularly considered in my former Book, that it is needless to insist any more upon it. I shall therefore refer the Reader thither, and then leave him to reflect on the Spirit and Conduct of this Writer, who can without blushing or remorse repeat this Aspersions, after the incredible Absurdity and Baseness of it had been so fully exposed.

He next finds fault with *David* for his War against the *Edomites*. And here he throws his Censure in the dark, since for ought he knows that War might be both just and necessary, and upon the highest Provocation. And I make no doubt that it really was so. For *David*, who would so gladly have maintained a good Harmony and Friendship with the *Ammonites*, the ancient Enemies

mies of his Country, would not have been less desirous to be at Peace with the *Edomites*, if it had been in his power. And that the *Edomites* were among those Enemies that had combined together to invade *Israel*, and had conspired its Ruin, may be plainly gathered from what is said in the 1xth *Psalms*; where the imminent danger *Israel* was in of being utterly destroyed is represented in a very expressive Manner; and a noble and pathetic Address to God for Victory over their Enemies, particularly the *Edomites*, with a humble Confidence in his Protection and Defence, from a sense of the Justice and Goodness of their Cause. Our Author goes on to tell us, that *David sawed the Edomites asunder*; for which we have nothing but his own Authority; for there is not one Word of this in the Account that is given us of this Matter in the History. He adds, *That he left none alive but what could save themselves by Flight*. But this is not true. Since it is represented as the Effect of this War, *That David put Garrisons in Edom, and all they of Edom became his Servants*. Which shews, that he did not destroy them all, but spared those that were willing to submit. And that therefore when it is said, that *Joab staid six Months in Edom, and slew every Male*; it is only to be understood of his killing those in Arms, and that refused to submit. But because it is said that *Joab went up to bury the dead*, which is probably to be understood of those of their own Army, that had been killed in fighting with the *Edomites*; and is afterwards added, that he *staid six Months in Edom*, therefore this sagacious Writer wisely concludes from it, p. 187. *That such was the Slaughter in Idumea, that Joab was six Months in burying the dead*. Compare 2 Sam. viii. 14. with 1 Kings ix. 15, 16.

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He concludes his Account of *David* with charging him with the *Venereal* Disease, which he pretends is described in the xxxviiiith *Psalms*, and very civilly invites me to publish a Volume of Sermons upon it. But he hopes *I will not allegorize it all, and says that this was the State not of David's Body, but of his Soul*, p. 188. And if I should say this, I am in no fear that this Author would be able to confute me. Any one that is acquainted with *David's* Stile, cannot but know that he often signifies the Anguish and Sorrow of his Mind, by Expressions that literally relate to some Pain or Distemper of Body. As in the lth *Psalms*, 8th Verse, *Make me to hear Joy and Gladness, that the Bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.* And Ps. xxxii. 2, 3, 4. *When I kept silence, my Bones waxed old, through my roaring all the Day long. For Day and Night thy Hand was heavy upon me: my Moisture is turned into the Drought of Summer.* Which Expressions are designed to signify the Grief and Anguish of his Mind, under a Sense of the divine Displeasure, from which he was freed upon his penitent Acknowledgment of his Sins, and humble and earnest Applications to God for Mercy, see v. 56. Our Author observes on this Occasion, that any one that reads and considers the Account Moses has given of the Plague of Leprosy, must see that it was *Venereal* *. If so, I am sure Moses

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* He seemed to be of another Opinion in his former Book, where he reckons the Leprosy with the Itch, Scab, and other cutaneous Foulnesses; for which he tells us, the People of Israel were very remarkable and famous. And that nothing was more beneficial and effectual in this Case than Cold-bathing. And that this was one principal Reason, why their great Lawgiver interwove this Practice with the very Genius and Constitution of their Religion. And then he adds, *That if a fresh and clear Skin, a good Complexion, a Freedom from cutaneous Diseases, a*

System

could not shew a greater Disapprobation of it than he has done, since this was regarded in his Law as the *bighest* Kind of Uncleaness; on the Account of which Persons were to be kept separate, as unfit for human Society, till they were cleansed from it. And it may justly be concluded, that if *David* had the Leprosy, we should have been told of it, since it must have occasioned his being separated from Society and the Affairs of Government for a while, as well as debarred from the House of God, and the Congregation of the People.

He concludes his Invective against *David*, with accusing him of *Fearfulness* and *Cowardice*; and declaring that he has nothing of *the manly Bravery of a Soldier*. This Charge is of a piece with the rest, and is designed to finish *David's* Character, in which he is resolved not to allow so much as one good Quality; and then he gives us the Reason, why he has been the more particular on *David's* Life and Character; it is because he is the *Saint-Errant of Spiritual Scholasticks, and School-Divinity cannot stand without him*. But he hopes to shew, *that Christianity can be no loser by this*. This Writer to be sure is mightily concerned for the Honour of Christianity, and has its Interests nearly at Heart! We are no way obliged to vindicate any of *David's* Faults, which are not concealed or disguised in Scripture; but he had also many eminent and noble Qualities, and has been always spoken of with great Regard by the whole Nation: Our

System of well-braced Nerves, and all that Strength, Activity and Vigour, which the Body can communicate to the Mind; if these things are of any Value or Consideration, Cold-Bathing deserves to be enjoined under the strongest religious Sanctions. Mor. Phil. Vol. I. p. 109, 110. So that here we see our Author himself has found out a good Reason, for several of the ritual Injunctions and Purifications required in the Law of *Moses*, which according to him must have been very wisely appointed,

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Saviour and his *Apostles* still mention him with Honour, not only as a great King, but as an illustrious *Prophet*; who was honoured to be the Penman of a very valuable Part of the sacred Writings; which I doubt not is the true Cause of this Writer's Venom, and determined Malice against him.



C H A P. IX.

His Vindication of what he had said against the Prophets, and particularly concerning Elifha's Management with Hazael considered. What he farther offers to shew, that the Prophets were the principal Fomenters of the War between Israel and Judah, proved to be false and groundless. The difference between the Baalitish Idolatry and that of Jeroboam shewn. The Heathen Idolatry, not merely the Worship of the one true God, by the Mediation of inferior Deities. Our Author's Account of the ancient Persians considered. Their Doctrine of two Principles, not the same with that of the Jews and Christians. They were Worshippers of the Sun and of Fire. His Account of Zoroaster's Doctrine, concerning the future Punishment of the Wicked. His Pretence that our Saviour's Doctrine, concerning the Resurrection and a future Judgment, was a Transcript from the second Book of Esdras, considered. That a future State was believed among the ancient Jews, vindicated against this Writer's Exceptions.

OUR Author begins his VIIth Section, p. 190, &c. with repeating what he had said before, that the Burden of the *Mosaical* Priesthood was the Cause of the Revolt of the ten Tribes from *Rehoboam*, which I have shewn to be all

all pure Fiction and Romance. He next represents me, as denying that *Solomon, during his whole Reign, was in Alliance with Egypt*, p. 192. when I had said no such thing. But whereas this Writer had represented, that it was his foreign Alliances, and particularly with *Egypt*, that secured him against the Conspiracy, which he pretends was formed against him by the Priests and Prophets, at the latter end of his Reign; see *Mor. Phil. Vol. I. p. 301.* I shewed that this is a mere Imagination, and that at the latter end of his Reign, *Egypt*, instead of giving Assistance to *Solomon*, rather gave Encouragement to his Enemies. Instances of this were produced, which he is pleased to take no Notice of.

He proceeds, p. 193. to a Repetition of what he had said more largely in his former Book, concerning the Prophets being the Causes of the several Revolutions in the Kingdom of *Israel*, but entirely passes over what was fully and distinctly offered to the contrary. At the same time he exclaims against me for representing him, as *justifying Jezebel in destroying the Prophets of the Lord*; and declares, that he had not justified or approved of it. But if any Man can read what he said in his former Book, p. 312, 314. and think he has not justified or approved of *Abab* and *Jezebel's* Conduct, in endeavouring to destroy the Prophets of the Lord, I shall wonder at it. He again gives us his Word, that the very *Constitution and Profession* of the *Prophets* was founded on the *Principles of Persecution*; and that the *Mosaick Law* was a *Scheme of Persecution, Superstition, and false Religion*. And then thinks fit to represent me, as *judging of Men's Commission and Authority from God by their own Pretensions to it, and Declarations concerning it*, as if I was for taking Men's own Word, as a sufficient Evidence of their divine Mission, without any farther Proof. And he assures
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his Reader, that tho' I admit Miracles as a Proof in Case of *Moses*, &c, I would not admit them, as Proofs in Case of *Mabomet* or *Zoroaster*. And when he can give us as good Reason to believe that *Mabomet* *, or *Zoroaster*, wrought signal Miracles in Proof of their Divine Mission, as we have to believe those of *Moses* or *Jesus Christ*, it will be time enough to consider them. All these are poor Insinuations that prove nothing, and are brought in to make up for a great Deficiency in Reason and Argument.

I had urged that the illustrious *Miracles* wrought by *Elijah* and *Elisba*, sufficiently proved the Divine Authority and Commission of those Prophets. To which he replies, that first I cannot prove the certain Truth of the Facts, but must take them entirely upon Trust from the Historians. And then, that if true, they would not prove any Commission they had to anoint *Jebu*, &c. To the first, I answer, that we have the same Proof that the Prophets wrought those Miracles, that we have that they had any hand in anointing *Jebu*. And in judging of the Legality of the Fact, as it is represented in the History, we must take the whole Fact in all its Circumstances, as there represented. And I am still of opinion, that supposing those Facts true, the Divine Commission of those Prophets is very evident. Nor can I believe, that God would have enabled them to confirm their Mission by so many illustrious Miracles, far transcending all human Power, and some of them, *e. q.* raising the

* *Mabomet*, tho' often called upon by the *Arabians* to prove his Divine Mission by *Miracles*, as *Moses* and *Jesus Christ* had done, never durst attempt to work any before them. Ignorant as they were, he had no hope of being able to impose upon them in such things, of which all their Senses must have been Witnesses. And, therefore, endeavoured to persuade them that there was no need of Miracles to prove his Mission. See *Prid. Life of Mabomet*, p. 27, 28, &c.

dead, probably that of all created Beings; if all the while they had only cloaked the Designs of their own Ambition, by a false Pretence to Inspiration from God, and were for sanctifying Treason and Murder with an hypocritical Appearance of Zeal for his holy Name. And yet all along to the very last, he gave them the most illustrious Testimonies of his Acceptance and Approbation.

P. 197. He comes to vindicate the Story of the Prophet *Elisba's* pretended Management with *Hazael*, which he had strangely misrepresented. He still insists upon it, that the Present *Hazael* gave the Prophet in the Name of *Benbadad*, was designed to bribe the Prophet in his own Favour; tho' it appears plainly from the Text that it was by *Benbadad's* Order, that *Hazael* went to the Prophet, and made him that Present. But he most absurdly argues from the Greatness of the Present, as if that was a Proof that the King did not send it, but the Captain gave it of himself. Whereas it is very *accountable*, that the King might order this magnificent Present on his own Account, when he sent to enquire of the Prophet about the Recovery of his Health; especially, as he might probably entertain some hopes, that he might be able to heal him, and that his Prayers might prevail for his Recovery. But no *reasonable* Account can be given of this Present on the Author's Scheme, who supposes that because it was so large, the Captain intended it as a Bribe. Indeed, if the Prophet could by his Interest among the *Syrians* have intrigued with the great Men and People there, as he supposes him to have done in *Israel*, and so have helped to raise *Hazael* to the Throne by his Influence, there would have been some Sense in his endeavouring by large Presents to bribe him to his Party, and engage him to embrace his Interests. But to suppose that *Hazael* should take such Pains, and be at such Expence to gain

gain a Stranger to help him to the Crown in a foreign Country, where he had no Acquaintance or Interest, is an Imagination that would scarce have entered into any Man's head, but this Author's.

I had urged the great Absurdity of supposing that *Elisba* would contribute to fix *Hazael* upon the Throne of *Syria*, when the Prospect of it gave him the greatest Trouble and Sorrow; and he certainly knew that *Hazael* would prove a greater Plague to *Israel* than all the other Kings of *Syria* before him. And I had taken Notice of the Unfairness of this Writer, who in order to elude this, had changed the Prophet's Words; and whereas he said to *Hazael*, *I know the Evil which thou shalt do unto the Children of Israel*, &c. had represented it as if he had only said, *I fear*, &c. as if it was a thing of which the Prophet was uncertain. Now what does our Author say to this? Instead of vindicating himself against this Charge of Misrepresentation, he goes on in it; and still insists upon it, that he only *feared it*, tho' the Prophet expressly declares that he *knew* it, and speaks of it as of a thing absolutely certain.

But he urges, that he should have *advised Hazael* against murdering his King, if he had any Notion of it; as if he could have hoped, that his Advice could have any Influence on a Man governed wholly by ambitious Views, and who he well know would stick at no Villany to gain a Crown; and when he had obtained it, would go on in a course of the greatest Oppressions and Cruelties. Nothing can be more evident, than it is from the whole Story, as recorded 1 *Kings* viii. that the Prophet would have been very far from doing any thing to promote *Hazael's* Advancement to the Throne of *Syria*, had it been in his power; and that tho' he foreknew and foretold it, as a thing that would certainly come to pass, yet it was a thing

thing highly disagreeable to him, and which he would gladly have prevented if he could have done it. And it may as justly be said, that our *Saviour* was the Author of *Judas's* Treason, because he foretold it, as that the Prophet was the Cause of *Hazeel's* invading the Throne of *Syria*, because he foretold that he would be King.

He proceeds, *p.* 200. to take Notice of the Prosperity of *Jeroboam's* Reign, and says, he had given *the true Reason of it*, and that I had *coined a Reason*; because I had attributed it to the Divine Mercy and Indulgence towards *Israel*, to try if his Goodness would lead them to Repentance; to which it is expressly ascribed, 2 *Kings* xiii. 23. xiv. 25, 26, 27. He had alledged, that *Jeroboam* was as great an Idolater, or Supporter and Encourager of Idolatry, as any that had been before him. And from thence most absurdly inferred, that the Prosperity of his Reign shewed, that Idolatry had not been the Cause of any of the Evils or Calamities that had happen'd to the Kings or People in former Reigns. And at that rate, it might be proved, that God never punishes wicked Princes or Nations for their Crimes, because he often suffers wicked Princes to prosper, and bears with a guilty People, and treats them with Mercy and Indulgence for a Time. But besides it was shewn, that *Jeroboam* the Second, fell into the Sin of *Jeroboam* the Son of *Nebat*, which consisted in worshipping the true God after a wrong Manner, yet he and the other Princes of the House of *Jehu* did not fall into the *Baalitish* Idolatry, as the House of *Ahab* had done, which was an express and open revolting from the God of *Israel*. But for this I am corrected by this Writer, who represents it as a very absurd Thing in me to suppose, that there were *two Sorts of Idolatry* in *Israel*. Whereas according to him, there was only one kind of Idolatry, which both *Jeroboam* and the House

House of *Ahab* were guilty of, the Worship of inferior tutelar Deities; *only Jeroboam worshipped the tutelar Deities of the Egyptians, and Ahab of the Sidonians.* But it is evident, from the Accounts given us of this Matter in the sacred History, that the *Baalitish* Idolatry is there represented, as of a worse kind than that of *Jeroboam*, and as carrying Idolatry to a greater and more criminal Height than the other. Hence it is said of *Ahab*, that *as if it had been a light thing to him to walk in the way of Jeroboam the Son of Nebat, that he served Baal, and worshipped him.* And on this Account it is that he did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger, than all the Kings of Israel that were before him, 1 Kings xiv. 31, 33. See also 2 Kings iii. 2, 3. Accordingly, when *Jehu* contrived to abolish the worship of *Baal*, he said, *Come see my Zeal for the Lord,* 2 Kings x. 16. And the *Worshippers of Baal* are there distinguished from the other *Israelites*, who are called the *Servants of the Lord*, as professing to worship the true God, v. 23. And yet it is observed concerning *Jehu*, that tho' he destroyed *Baal* out of Israel, yet he took no heed to walk in the Law of the Lord God of Israel with all his Heart; for he departed not from the Sins of *Jeroboam the Son of Nebat*, v. 31. *Jeroboam* the First did not pretend to fall from the Worship of the Lord *Jehovah*, the God of Israel. He said in his Heart, *If this People go up to the House of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the Heart of this People turn again to the House of David.* Whereupon he took Counsel, and made two Calves of Gold, and said unto the People, *It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: Behold thy Gods, O Israel,* or as it might be justly rendered, *Behold thy God, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt.*

* See concerning this what is said above, Chap. IV. p.

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And he set the one in *Bethel*, and the other in *Dan*, *1 Kings* xii. 26—30. From which Passage it is evident, that *Jeroboam* did not intend, as this Writer represents it, to worship the *Egyptian tutelar Gods*, but to worship the God that brought up *Israel out of the Land of Egypt*, which is the Character under which the Lord *Jehovah* is frequently described, see *Ex.* xx. 2. *Pf.* lxxxi. 10. *Hof.* xiii.

4. And indeed it could not be supposed, that the *Egyptian* tutelar Gods would bring the *Israelites* out of *Egypt* to the Destruction of the *Egyptians*. He professed to worship the same God that was worshipped at *Jerusalem*, but only told the People that it was too much for them to go up to the Temple there, and therefore erected Temples of his own, to which they might go for Divine Worship; and there placed *Golden Calves*, as symbolical Representations of the Divine Presence. This was a great Sin, as being an express Breach of the *Second Commandment*, which forbade the worship of God by Images. And it tended to lead the People wrong, and gradually to debase and corrupt their Notions of the Deity, and to prepare the way for other kinds of Idolatry; when once they had forsaken the worship which God himself had appointed. But afterwards *Ahab* went farther, and established the worship of *other* Gods. It is probable several of the People, might have fallen into the worship of *Baal*, &c. before, and were connived at by the former Kings. But now the Worship of *Baal*, as the proper Deity was established; the Altars that were erected to the Lord *Jehovah* were thrown down; and those that worshipped him were persecuted, *1 Kings* xix. 10. This was an express and open Revolt from the true God, and therefore brought the House of *Ahab* under a peculiar Guilt and Vengeance.

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But our Author represents the matter, as if in worshipping *Baal*, they still intended to worship the true God, but only were for worshipping him by the *Mediation of Baal*, as an inferior Deity. And he positively pronounces, that the Worship they paid him, was all *subordinate mediatorial Worship*. But tho' there were inferior Deities called *Baalim* (tho' some suppose these are only to be understood of the different Images of *Baal*) yet it seems evident, from the whole Account given us, that there was a chief God, who is still called *Baal* by way of Eminency, and spoken of in the singular Number; and whom they regarded as the *principal Object* of their Worship. There is not the least Hint, that they looked higher to any superior Deity; but in *Baal* their Views terminated, whilst the true God was neglected. By *Baal*, it is most probable they intended to worship the Sun. * Him the ancient *Phenicians* acknowledged to be *יהוה* *יהוה*, the only Lord of Heaven. † And they honoured him with the Name of *Baal*, which properly signifies *Lord*. This Writer indeed takes upon him to affirm, that *the Idolatry of the Heathens was all of the same Kind; the Worship of God by the Mediation of subordinate, national, residential, and tutelar Deities*, p. 201. As if the Heathens still had their Views ultimately fixed upon the one living and true God; and only intended to worship the supreme Lord of the Universe, by the *Mediation* of inferior Deities. But whatever Notions some of their Philosophers and wise Men might have of this Matter, there is no Proof that this was the Worship established in their respective States by their Legislators, or practised by the Peo-

* See *Calmer's Dissertation on the Phenician Deities*. And *Vossius de Idol.* l. 2. cap. 4. 6.

† See the Fragments of *Sanchoniathon* in *Euseb. de Prep. Evangl.* l. v.

ple. The Platonists indeed talked of Genii or Dæmons, whose Office they supposed it to be to carry our Prayers to the Gods, and to bring from them Oracles, and divine Gifts to us. See *Plutarch. De Isid. & Osirid*, and *Apuleius de Deo Socrat.* But then it is to be observed, that these Mediators or Intercessors were supposed to intervene not between Men, and the one *supreme* God, but between Men and the *Celestial* Deities, of whom there were many whom they acknowledged and worshipped; nor did they invest those whom they called *Celestial* Deities, with this mediatory Office. *Plato* himself, whatever Notions he had of the first Principle and Cause of all things, yet in his Books of *Laws*, which were designed for the People, did not prescribe to them the worship of the one *supreme* God, because he look'd upon him to be incomprehensible; and that what he is, and how he is to be worshipped, is not to be described or declared; nor were the *Vulgar* capable of forming a just Notion of him. But he appointed twelve solemn Festivals to be observed to the twelve principal Gods; and proposed the Worship of the Heavens and the Stars, whose Divinity he recommended. See his *eighth* Book of *Laws*; and his *Epinomy* or Appendix to his Book of *Laws*. Indeed the *Vulgar* among the *Heathens*, did in many Places worship many Gods in Conjunction; and tho' they had a Notion of one *chief* God above the rest, he whom they regarded as such was generally only an Idol, of the same kind, tho' of greater Eminence than the rest. Hence we find all the Gods often joined together, and worshipped in Conjunction with *Jupiter* at the Head of them. They usually speak of God and the Gods promiscuously, because they considered their Deities collectively, as making up one System. They had a Temple dedicated to all the Gods both at *Rome* and *Athens*, and they were

all honoured with one common Festival called *Θεοξένια*; and they had *Altars* consecrated to all the Gods and Goddesſes, with ſuch Inſcriptions as theſe, *Dis deabusque omnibus*, and *dibus deabusque omnibus*, and the like. When they invoked any particular Deity, it was uſual for the Priests, afterwards, to add an Invocation of all the Deities in general, as *Servius* notes upon that of *Virgil*;

Dii Deaque omnes studium quibus arva tueri.

In many Nations the *Sun* was the Deity whom they principally adored *. And *Job* represents this kind

* Concerning this ſee *Vossius* at large, *de Idololatria*, lib. 2. cap. 3. ad cap. 18. *Macrobius Saturnal.* lib. 1. takes a great deal of Pains to prove that the *Sun* was the one Universal Deity, who was adored under ſeveral Names. This Plea he manages with a great deal of Wit and Learning in the Perſon of *Vettius Prætextatus*. And he concludes all with a double Citation; the one is of a ſhort Invocation, which he tells us the *Heathen* Theologiſts made uſe of in *Sacris*, in their Devotions, or Sacred Ceremonies; the Form whereof runs thus, *ἡλίου πάντων κρατορ κόσμου πνεῦμα, κόσμου δύναμις, κόσμος οὐτός*. O *Sun* omnipotent, the Spirit of the World, the Power of the World, the Light of the World. The other is taken out of the Verſes of *Orpheus*, in which the *Sun* is called *Jupiter*, the Father of the Sea and Land; and the Generation of all things is aſcribed to him.

By ſome the *Heaven* or circumambient *Aether* was eſteemed *Jove* or the chief God. Remarkable to this Purpoſe is the Verſe *Cicero* cites from *Ennius*. *Aspice hoc sublime Candens quem invocant omnes Jovem*. And he cites *Euripides* to the ſame Purpoſe, ſpeaking of the *Aether*. *Hunc ſummum perhibeto Divum, hunc perhibeto Jovem*. *Cic. de Nat. Deor.* lib. 2. And in his fourth Book of *Academick* Questions, he obſerves concerning ſeveral of the *Stoicks*, that they ſuppoſed the *Aether* to be the chief God, being endowed with a Mind whereby all things are governed; and that *Cleanthes* a principal *Stoick*, and Scholar of *Zeno*, looked upon the *Sun* to be Lord of all, and as having the ſupreme Dominion. From whence he infers, according to the manner of the *Academicks*, that by this Diſagreement among the wiſe we are conſtrained to be ignorant who is our Lord; for we know not whether to pay our Service

kind of Worship, as a denying the God which is above, Job xxxi. 28. Among some, *Universal Nature* was the one supreme Deity, and the several Parts of the Universe were worshipped as Parts of the Divinity *. In *Greece* and *Rome*, where *Polytheism*, or the Worship of many Gods was established, *Jupiter* had a supremacy over the rest. But this *Jupiter*, who was regarded as the chief of the Gods, the *Thunderer*, and the *Father* of Gods and Men, was confounded with that *Jupiter*, whom the Poets sung, and of whom the Mythologists told and the People believed such strange Fables. So that it may be justly said, that the only true God, was to them

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to the *Sun* or *Æther*. *Plato* in *Cratylus*, supposes that the Worship of the *Heaven* and *Stars* was the most ancient Religion of the *Pagans*. It seems to me, says he, that the first Inhabitants of *Greece*, antiently, as well as many of the *Barbarians* now, esteemed these only to be Gods, the *Sun* and *Moon*, and *Earth*, and *Stars*, and *Heaven*. φαίνονται μοι, οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων τῶν περὶ τὰν ἑλληνίδα, τούτους μόνους θεοὺς ἠγνοῦσθαι, ὥσπερ οὖν πολλὰς τῶν βαρβάρων, ἥλιον, καὶ σελήνην, καὶ γῆν, καὶ ἀστρά, καὶ ὁρανον. And *Aristotle* to the same purpose observes, that it hath been delivered to us by those of very antient Times, both that the *Stars* are Gods, and that the *Divinity* containeth the whole of *Nature*, *Arist. Metaph.* l. 1. cap. 8. *Maimonides* saith concerning the *Zabians*, whose Sect, he tells us, did over-run a great Part of the *Earth*, that they all held the Eternity of the *World*; and that the *Heavens* and *Stars* according to them are the Deity. *Mor. Novech.* Par. 3. cap. 29.

* *Plutarch* observes concerning the *Egyptians*, τὸν πρῶτον θεὸν τὸ παρ' ἡμῶν τὸν αὐτὸν νομίζουσι. That they account the first or chief God to be the same with the τὸ παν, the *World* or the *Universe*. And he mentions this as a Proof of their Piety and just Sentiments of the *Divinity*. See *Plut. de Isid. & Osirid.* In the *Theology* generally received among the *Stoicks*, the *World* or the one animated mundane System was God. They considered Souls, as Parts of God the Soul of the *World*, and visible and corporeal things as Parts of his Body. And upon this Principle they vindicated and accounted for the *Pagan Idolatry*, and worshipped the several Parts of the *Universe*, under the Names of the popular Deities. But whilst they thus pretended to worship one God under different Names and Manifestations

them in a great Measure an *unknown God*; whom they neglected and disregarded, whilst their Worship was paid to *Idol-Deities*. So vain where they become in their *Imaginations*, and their *foolish Heart was darkened*. It was to prevent this, that all manner of Worship of *inferior Deities* was strictly forbidden in the Law of *Moses*, whereby it was gloriously distinguished from other Laws and Constitutions, and they were expressly commanded to worship the one true God, and him only. While among other Nations, where the Worship of many Gods obtained, and was countenanced by their Laws, Men soon began to worship them more than the Creator; and lost the Knowledge and Worship of the one living and true God, amidst a multiplicity of *Idol-Deities*.

This Writer had in his former Book, asserted, that there was a most bloody War carried on between *Israel* and *Judah*, under the pretence of Religion, for the space of about 260 Years; that *Judah* was the Aggressor in this War; and that the Prophets had the chief hand in carrying it on. But on the contrary it was shewn, that the Prophets had no hand in fomenting the War between *Israel* and *Judah*, but rather dissuaded and discouraged it; that it does not appear that *Judah* was the Aggres-

sors, they really deified the several Parts of the material World, and the several Powers and Virtues diffused thro' the whole; and thus instead of curing the popular *Polytheism* only established it; and as *Plutarch* observes, they filled the Air, Heaven, Earth, and Sea with Gods. *Plut. de communis notit. adversus Stoicos*. These Sentiments of the *Stoicks*, *Cicero* represents thus, *Quoniam hunc mundum esse sapientem, habere mentem, qua & se, & ipsum fabricata sit, & omnia moderetur, moveat, regat, erit persuasum etiam, solem, lunam, stellasque omnes, terram, mare, Deos esse, quod quidam animali intelligentia per omnia permeat, & transeat. Quæst. Acad. 1. 4. Larre*, the most learned of the *Romans*, had the same Notion, as appears from *August. de Civit. Dei. 1. 7. cap. 8.*

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for in this War; and that the War was so far from being continual and uninterrupted, as he is pleased to represent it, that we read of no Wars between them for a hundred Years together, and afterwards for fourscore Years more *. Now what does this Writer say to this? It is not his way to acknowledge, that he has been wrong, let it be proved ever so plainly upon him. But in order to throw dust in the Eyes of his Readers, and to put on an Appearance of saying something, he enters upon a long dull Detail from p. 202, to p. 210. most of which is nothing at all to the Point in question, and the few things that might be so, are entirely misrepresented. Thus e. g. as to the War between Baasha and Asa, he not only supposes that Judah was the Aggressor in this War, tho' it appears from the History, that Baasha King of Israel begun it, see 2 Chron. xvi. 1. But in a manifest Contradiction to the Account there given us, will have it, that the Prophets put Asa upon making an Alliance with Benhadad King of Syria. He expressly asserts, that the Prophets of the Lord approved of this Alliance, and justified it in Asa, and engaged a foreign idolatrous Power to do their Work for them, p. 203. whereas the very contrary to this is true. For the Prophet Hanani came to Asa in the Name of God, and reproved him for this Alliance, which so enraged the King, that he put the Prophet in Prison, 2 Chron. xvi. 7—10. So signal a Falsification of the History furnisheth a new Proof to the Reader, who has had several Proofs of it before, that this Writer, who is pleased to honour himself with the Title of Philalethes, the Lover of Truth, will stick at nothing, how false soever, that he thinks will serve his Cause, or tend to expose the Prophets or Priests. And then he

* See Div. Author. p. 326, 327.

Goes on to insinuate, that it was because *Asa* had entered into this Alliance with the idolatrous *Syrians*, that he is so highly extolled by the *Historians*; and that *Jehoshaphat* is blamed by them for entering into an Alliance with *Abab* for the defence of his Country. But it is certain that *Jehoshaphat* has better a Character given him by the *Historians*, than *Asa* himself; tho' he is blamed for entering into Affinity with the House of *Abab*, which produced many Mischiefs to his Posterity. Our Author after this, and repeating what he had said before concerning *Abab's* four hundred Prophets, which has been already considered, hath nothing farther to offer to fix the Charge of all the *Commutations and Revolutions in the State upon the Prophets*; and yet very gravely tells his Reader, that any Man must see this, who will read the History with his own natural Eye-sight, and without Systematical Spectacles, p. 206.

He had advanced it as a Charge against all the Prophets that lived before the *Assyrian* Captivity, and afterwards against all the Prophets in general, that they delaimed only against *Idolatri*, and scarce ever meddled with the other *Vices* and Immoralities of the People. The falshood of this Charge was clearly shewn*. He finds himself unable to justify it, and yet is unwilling to retract it. He observes, that *Isaiab*, *Hosea*, and *Micah*, whom I had particularly mentioned, as strongly inveighing against all manner of Vice and Immorality, were all living and prophesying at the last *Assyrian* Captivity; but it is also certain, that they had been living and prophesying a considerable time before it. And most part of *Isaiab's* Prophecies, and probably all those of *Hosea* and *Micah* were delivered before that Captivity; and they are all of the same Strain, every where reproving the People for their Vices

* See *Div. Author*, p. 330—332.

and Sins, and calling them to Repentance. As doth also the Prophet *Amos*, who prophesied before the *Affyrian* Captivity, in the Reign of *Yeroboam*, when the *Israelites* were in great Prosperity. Our Author is pleased to take no Notice of this, tho' I had mentioned it, but contents himself with calling upon his Reader to see the Justice and Candour of this Systematical Writer; and if he can persuade his Reader, after considering what I offered, that there is any Justice or Candour in his Representation of this Matter, I will readily own that he is a very lucky Writer.

He falls heavily upon me for representing it as an absurd thing, to suppose that the *Jews* should learn their Religion and Aversion to Idolatry from the *Persians*, the Adorers of the *Sun* and of *Fire*. He is astonished that any Man that pretends to Learning, should at this time of Day believe this groundless Story and Abuse of the *Persians*, a Calumny which had been cast upon them by the *Greek* Historians, who knew nothing of the *Persians* or their Religion; and refers me to *Dr. Hyde*, as having fully confuted this, and proved beyond all Contradiction, that the *Medes* and *Persians*, from their very first Records, had never been Idolaters. But *Dr. Hyde* himself owns, as hath been already shewn, that they had fallen into *Sabaism* before the Days of *Abraham*, and after being reformed by him, relapsed into it again; and *Zoroaster* brought in another Reformation among them in the Reign of *Darius Hystaspes*. But after all, the Account *Dr. Hyde* gives of the Religion of the ancient *Persians*, is far from being so authentic and unexceptionable, as this Writer represents it. The Authorities he produces, are chiefly from modern *Persian* or *Arabian* Writers, scarce any of them above 5 or 600 Years old, or from the Declarations of the present *Priests* among the *Gaures*

or modern Worshippers of Fire, or from the *Liturgies* and Books now in use among them; which carry in them many Marks of Mixtures taken from the *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Christians*. And these Authorities can scarce be judged, in the Opinion of any impartial unprejudiced Person, to preponderate those of the ancient *Greek* and *Roman* Writers, who gave an Account of the Religion of the *Persians* in the times in which they lived; and who considering the Correspondence between the *Greeks* and *Persians*, before and after the Conquest made by *Alexander*, and afterwards between the *Romans* and *Parthians*, could hardly be supposed so ignorant, or so misinformed, concerning the *Persians* and their Religion, as the learned Doctor supposes. And tho' there may be some Variation among them, yet it is observable, that they are for the most part very uniform, in the Accounts they give of the Religion of the ancient *Persians*. Mr. *Chapman* very justly observes, that by Dr. *Hyde's* own Acknowledgment, we know nothing of the *Persian* Religion, while *Media* and *Persia* were in subjection to the *Assyrian* for above a thousand Years together; and that after the *Medes* had shook off the *Assyrian* Yoke, the first Lawgiver in Religion among them after *Zoroaster* was *Keyomaras*; and what System of Religion his was, the Doctor could inform us, from no better an Authority than *Sharisthani* a modern *Arabian*. And all that *Sharisthani* himself knew of it was from modern *Persians* or *Indians*; and how much their Accounts are to be depended upon, we may conclude from their supposing *Keyomaras* to be the first Man Adam, see *Euseb.* p. 420. And if what our Author himself tells us be true, that the *Cuthites* or *Samaritans*, the People whom *Assarhaddon* had placed about *Samaria*, were *Persians*, transplanted thither

thither out of the Northern Provinces of Persia *. See Lett. to Euseb. p. 52. Here is a Proof that the ancient Persians were Idolators. Since it is manifest from the Account given of them, that those Colonies were so, 2 Kings xvii. 30, 31, 33. And it was by Acquaintance with the Jewish Law, that they were turned from their Idolatry, and at length had as great an Aversion to it as the Jews themselves.

This Writer very positively pronounces, that every Word that I had said about the Persian and Magian Religion is false. And whereas I had observed that the main Principle of the Magian Religion was the acknowledgement of two Principles, the one Good, and the other Evil †, both of which they acknowledged to be Gods, and to both they paid their Adorations: He answers, that their Notion of the two Principles was no other than the current Doctrine among Jews and Christians concerning God and the Devil. I will grant this, if he can prove, that the Jews or Christians worshipped the Devil, as the Persians did the evil God Arimanus **. A noted Instance of this we have in Xerxes, who as Plutarch informs us in his Life of Themistocles,

* Dr. Hyde himself observes, *de Relig. vet. Persar.* cap. 3. p. 16. That Esarhaddon transplanted into Samaria, the Medes, Shushanites, and Elamites or Persians; and indeed these are expressly mentioned as transplanted thither, *Isa. iv. 6.* and by comparing this with 2 Kings xvii. there is a more authentick Proof of their being addicted to Idolatry in those ancient Times, than any Testimony that can be produced relating to that Time to the contrary.

† Dr. Hyde acknowledges, that many of the Persians maintained that these two Principles were coeternal. *De Relig. vet. Pers.* p. 164. 295, and probably from them Manes, who was a Persian, derived his Doctrine.

** Plutarch expressly affirms, as from the Persians themselves, that they were taught to sacrifice, not only to the God Ormazdes, but to the evil one Arimanus; to the one for obtaining Good Things, to the other for averting Evil. See Plutarch *de Isid. & Officiis*.

prayed

prayed to *Arimanius*, that all his Enemies might ever be of the same Mind with the *Greeks*, to abuse and expel the bravest Men among them. Or, if he can prove, that the *Jews* or *Christians* held the *Being* of two chief Causes, Good and Evil, out of the Mixture of which all things were made, and that there is a perpetual Struggle between the good and evil Principles, sometimes the one prevailing, sometimes the other; tho' it is true, they held that the good Principle will finally be victorious, and the evil Principle be overcome. *Zoroaster* indeed, according to Dr. *Prideaux* *, introduced a superior Principle above these two. But this was a Reformation in the Religion of the *Magians*. And if so, it may be justly supposed, that he had learned it from the *Jews*, with whose sacred Writings, according to the Account given of him, he was well acquainted.

Another thing I had said concerning the ancient *Persians* and the *Magi* was, that they worshipped the *Sun* and *Fire*. The Author absolutely denies this, and affirms that they worshipped the one true God, and him only. But I scarce know any thing in which the best ancient Writers, that give any Account of the *Persians* and their Religion, are more universally agreed than in this, that they paid an Adoration to the *Sun* and to *Fire* †. *Herodotus* had travelled

* *Prideaux's Connection*, Part I. Book IV. p. M. 214, 215.

† Dr. *Hyde* himself, notwithstanding all his Prejudices in Favour of the *Persians*, owns enough to fix the Charge upon them, of paying an undue idolatrous Veneration to the *Sun* and *Planets*. He acknowledges, That to the true Religion they added *Sabaism*, giving too much Veneration to the *Stars* and *Elements*. See *de Relig. vet. Pers.* cap. 1. p. 2. and cap. 8. p. 154. He observes from *Sparisani*, that there were two Sorts of *Sabians*, the one better, viz. the Worshippers of the *Planets* or *Stars*, the other worse, viz. the Worshippers of *Idols* or *Images*, and that the *Persians* were of the former Sort. cap. 1. p. 5. cap. 3. p. 88.

travelled over several of the *Persian* Provinces to collect Materials for his History; and his Accounts of the ancient *Persians*, and their Religion in his Time, are much more to be depended on, than those of the modern *Persians* Writers, who are extremely inaccurate, and full of Blunders and Inconsistencies, in what relates to the ancient History and Chronology of the *Persians*. And he expressly affirms

He saith, that the Worship the *Persians* paid the *Planets* was immediate, and not by *Images* as the *Sabians*; where he owns, the *Persians* paid a Worship to the *Planets*, tho' he calls it a civil Worship, cap. 3. p. 98. He observes, that tho' *Xerxes* destroyed the other *Grecian* Temples and Altars, yet he spared the *Delian* Temple of *Apollo*, and the Temple at *Ephesus*; because the former was dedicated to the *Sun*, the latter to *Diana*, or the *Moon*, cap. 3. p. 98. He owns, that in the Military Processions of the *Persians*, they carried the Image of the *Sun*, and did not march till after *Sun* Rising, that they might first pay a due Respect to the *Sun*, whose favourable Aspect they thought might be of Advantage to them, p. 121. He acknowledges, that they prostrated themselves before the *Fire*, and paid a great Veneration to it, as a pure thing, representing the Planet *Mars* in Colour, and God in Purity, and therefore the holy *Fire* kept in their Temple, was called the *Fire* of *Mars*, p. 111. It is true he affirms, as I have just now observed, that the Worship they paid to the *Fire* and to the *Sun*, was only a civil Worship. But I cannot see how this can be defended, for it was not upon a civil, but upon a religious Account, that they worshipped the *Sun* and the *Fire*. The Worship they paid them, was in their solemn sacred Ceremonies and Acts of Religion. All that can be gathered from the Account the Doctor gives us, is, that they did not regard them as the only or supreme Deity; and that the Worship they rendered to them, was a relative Worship, or a subordinate religious Worship. And if this be allowed to be an Excuse, it will excuse the Worship paid by other *Heathens* to Images, as well as the Worship paid by the *Persians* to the *Fire*; since the more learned among them made use of the very same Pretences to defend themselves. See *Mor. Tyr. Dist.* 38. *Julian. Oper.* p. 537. 5. 39. *Varro apud Agust. de Civit. Dei. lib.* 7. cap. 5. and I cannot but think the Reflexion of *Clemens Alexandrinus* a very just one; who after having observed that the *Magi* and *Persians* worshipped *Fire*, and that they look upon *Water* and *Fire* as the only Images of the Gods, blames them for their Ignorance. Whilst they

could undoubtedly affirm. - *Xenophon* who had been in *Asia*, and attended *Cyrus* the younger, and who was no Stranger to the *Persian* Customs, in his ascent of *Cyrus*, speaks of *Horses* dedicated to the *Sun*, lib. 4. and many antient Writers mention the same Custom among the *Persians*. And this had been of long standing among those that paid an idolatrous Worship to the *Sun*, of which we have an Instance, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 5, ii. where we read of *Horses*, dedicated to the *Sun*, by some of the idolatrous Kings of *Judah*, which, with the Priests that burnt Incense to the *Sun*, were exterminated by that great reforming King *Josiah*. The same *Xenophon* in his *Cyropædia* tells us, that *Horses* were sacrificed to the *Sun*, and certain Victims killed to the Earth, according to the Directions of the *Magi*; and represents *Cyrus* as sacrificing on the Summit of a Mountain, according to the Custom of his Country, to *Jove* paternal, and the *Sun*, &c. and as offering a Prayer to him. *Strabo*, in his Account of the *Persians*, affirms, that they worshipped the *Sun*, and that they prayed to the *Fire*. And concerning the *Caramanians*, or Inhabitants of *Kerinan*, a Province of *Persia*, observes, that they sacrificed an *Ass* to *Mars*, *Geograph. lib. 15*. Dr. *Hyde* indeed denies this, because the *Persians* do not think *Mars* a God, *de Relig. vet. Persar. cap. 3. p. 89*. This may be very true of the modern *Persians*; but he produces no Authority to shew, that the ancient *Persians* did not look upon *Mars* as a Deity. And it appears from his own Account, that they had a particular Veneration for the Planet *Mars*, and called their holy Fire the Fire of *Mars*. 2, *Currius*, therefore, speaks very agreeably to the ancient Customs of the *Persians*, when he represents *Darius* before his Battle with *Alexander*, as invoking the *Sun*, *Moon*, and the eternal Fires. The Account *Suidas* gives of the *Persians*, is what the ancient Writers

Writers generally agree in, that they thought the *Sun* to be *Mitbras*, to whom they offered many Sacrifices. That the *Persians* worshipped the *Sun* under the Name of *Mitbras* was so well known, that the *Romans*, who frequently adopted the Worship of other Nations, did in imitation of them, pay a religious Worship to the *Sun* under the Name of *Mitbras*. Hence there are Altars and Coins with Inscriptions to *God the Sun*, the *invincible Mithras*; to *the Sun the invincible Mithras*; to *the most Holy Sun*, &c. *Deo Soli invicto Mitbræ*; ☉, *Soli invicto Mitbræ*; ☉, *Sanctissimo Soli*, &c. ☉ *Numini invicto Soli Mitbræ Ara*. Some of the *Persian* Kings, particularly *Sapores*, persecuted the Christians because they refused to worship the *Sun*; and *Sozomes* informs us concerning *Ushazanes*, who had formerly been Preceptor to *Sapores*, that having in compliance with the King worshipped the *Sun*, he afterwards fell into a deep Sorrow on the account of it; and being asked by the King the reason of his Sadness, he said to him, *It grieves me that I live and see the Sun, when I deserved to have died long ago; since for thy Sake against the Judgment of my own Mind, I have worshipped the Sun.* τὸν ἡλίου προσκύνῃσα. See *Sozomen Hist. Eccles. lib. 2. cap. 8. Niceph. Hist. Eccles. lib. 8. cap. 36.* r. Hyde indeed expressly denies, that the *Persians* ever called the *Fire* or the *Sun God*, or that they ever prayed to it or worshipped it with Intention as God. *De Relig. vet. Pers. cap. 1. p. 14.* But he owns that by *Mitbras* they understood the *Sun*, and that the *Persians* regarded *Mitbras* as a God, comes to us with as concurring an Evidence as any thing in all Antiquity. Nor has the learned Doctor any Authority to produce against it, but the Testimony of the modern *Gautes* and *Persian* Priests, who deny that they worship the *Sun*, or any but God alone, cap. 1. p. 5. 9, 12. cap. 4. p. 108. But we are not to confound

confound the Religion of the modern *Gaures* with that of the ancient *Persians* or *Magians*, as several learned Persons are of opinion Dr. *Hyde* has too much done. It seems manifest (as I have already hinted) from the Accounts given us of the *Gaures*, that there are several things in their Religion consider'd in its present State, which have been taken from the *Jews* and *Christians*. According to the Account Dr. *Hyde* himself gives us of that *Zoroaster*, from whom they pretend to derive their Religion; he had read the *Jewish* Scriptures, and his Religion had in it a great Mixture of *Judaism*; and our Author himself tells us, p. 212, that *Zoroaster*, as all the *Persian* and *Arabian* Writers agree, had been a Servant in his younger Years to the Prophet *Esdras*. This indeed is carrying it too far; for it is not true, that all the *Persian* and *Arabian* Writers agree in this. Some of the *Persian* Writers tell us, that *Zoroaster* was a Disciple of the Prophets *Elijah* and *Elisha*. Others say, that it was one of the Disciples of the Prophet *Jeremiah* whom he served. And Dr. *Hyde*, with whom agrees Dr. *Prideaux*, thinks it is most likely that he served the Prophet *Daniel* *. But allowing our Author's Account, that he had been a Servant to *Ezra*, then it may be justly concluded, that *Zoroaster* learned many Things in his Religion under *Ezra*, that great Restorer of the *Jewish* State. So that according to this Account, instead of pretending that the *Jews* learned their Religion from the *Persians*, it may with much greater Reason be alledged, that the *Persians* learned their Religion from the *Jews* in those Points, in which *Zoroaster* reformed the ancient Religion of the *Magians*. Our Author seems aware of this, and therefore, tho' he sometimes speaks with great Respect of *Zoroaster*, as an eminent Reformer and Law-giver, yet at other times he

* Concerning this, the Reader may consult Dr. *Prideaux's* Connect. Part I. Book IV. p. 224, 225.

thinks fit to represent him as having rather corrupted, than reformed, the ancient *Magian* Religion †; because he mixed some of the *Mosaick* Rites and Usages with the Religion of the *Magians*. But if he did so, it only proves the high Veneration he had for the Law of *Moses*. And it may reasonably be concluded, that from that Law he derived more excellent Notions of God and of his Worship, and was thereby enabled to reform the Notions the *Persians* entertained of the Deity, and to bring them from their grosser Idolatry to a greater Refinement in their Worship.

This Writer indeed will have *Esdra*s the Prophet, whom he tells us *Zoroaster* served, and whom he supposes to be the Author of the second Book of

† Dr. *Hyde*, who is our Author's Oracle, plainly affirms, that the Religion of the *Persians* agrees in many things with the *Jewish*, and that a considerable Part of it was taken from it. It is Part of the title of his 10th Chapter; *Perfarum Religio in multis convenit cum Judaica, & magna ex parte ab ea desumpta fuit*. And indeed this is uncontestably true, if understood of the *Persian* Religion as laid down in the Book *Ziend*, which they believe was compiled by *Zerdusht* or *Zoroaster*; concerning which, the Reader may consult the Account Dr. *Prideaux* gives of it from Dr. *Hyde*. See *Prideaux* Connect. Part I. Book IV. p. m. 225. But I must own, I cannot think the Religion taught in that Book, was the Religion of the *Persians*, so long since as the Days of *Darius Hystaspes*, in whose Reign it is pretended, this *Zerdusht* lived and wrote this Book. If this was the Case, I cannot see upon what Foundation *Haman* could procure a Decree from *Artaxerxes*, for extirpating the *Jews*, under a Pretence that they were a People whose Laws were diverse from all People, *Esth.* iii 8. Since according to this Account, the Religion of the *Persians*, and which was profess'd by the King and Court, and all the Nobility (See *Prid.* *ibid.* p. 223.) had before that time, adopted most of the *Jewish* Rites and Institutions, whereby they were peculiarly distinguish'd from other Nations. It seems therefore to me, that the Book is not of such Antiquity as is supposed; or at least the Religion there contained, did not become the national Religion of the *Persians* till long after; and that therefore no certain Argument can be produced from that Book, much less from the Authority of the modern *Persians*, to shew what was the Religion of the *Persians* in the most antient Times.

*Esdra*s,

*Esdra*s, to be a different Person from *Ezra* the Scribe. But it is manifest, that the Author of the second Book of *Esdra*s pretends to be the same with *Ezra* the Scribe, as appears from the Account he gives of himself, 2 *Esdra*. ch. i. 1, 2. compared with *Ezra* vii. 1, &c. I would observe by the way, that our Author pretends here to have a very good Opinion of the second Book of *Esdra*s; and he had mentioned it before, p. 145. as a genuine Prophecy written about 400 Years before Christ. And the Reason why he pretends it was then written is very evident; it is because he would insinuate, that our Lord Jesus Christ and his Apostles, learned their Doctrines concerning the Resurrection and the last Judgment, and a State of future Rewards and Punishments from that Book; and that they have revealed nothing to the World, on these Heads, but what was as plainly and expressly contained in that Book before. And accordingly he tells us, That “the 24th and 25th Chapters of St. *Matthew*’s Gospel, are a plain Transcript out of this Prophet, and a great part of it almost verbatim.” p. 212. The Reader could not but know before this, how little this Writer’s confident Assertions are to be depended upon, and here is another manifest Instance of it. As to the 25th Chapter of *Matthew*, there is not the least Foundation for this Pretence. There is something said concerning the future Judgment, 2 *Esdra*. vii. 30—36. But it is so far from being almost verbatim the same with the Account given of it by our Saviour, *Matt.* xxv. that is as different from it, as any two Passages relating to that future Judgment can well be supposed to be. And tho’ there are some Passages in this Apocryphal Book, Chap. vi. 24—28. ix. 3. xiii. 29—38. that bear a likeness to some Expressions made use of by our Saviour in the 24th Chapter of *Matthew*, yet to

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pretend

pretend that that 24th Chapter of *Matthew*, and our Saviour's admirable Predictions there concerning the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the Calamities that were coming on the *Jewish* Nation, is *plainly a Transcript* out of the second Book of *Esdra*s, will appear to any one that carefully compares them, to be so wild and extravagant an Assertion, that few but this Writer would have ventured upon it. The Compiler of the second Book of *Esdra*s, has indeed manifest Allusions to several Passages in the New Testament, not only in the Evangelists, but in *St. Paul's* Epistles, and in the Revelations of *St. John*: and it is evident to any one that reads that Book, that it was forged after the time of our Saviour. See particularly ch. vii. 28, 29. And this Apochryphal Piece, which is of no Authority, which never was known or acknowledged among the *Jews*, as it must have been, if it had been the genuine Work of *Esdra*s; which has several Absurdities and Falshoods in it, and is rejected by all the Learned as spurious; this is what our Author, in his great kindness to Christianity, would put upon the World as an Original, from whence the Gospel-Doctrines taught by our Saviour concerning the Resurrection, a future Judgment, &c. are taken.

But to return to the Account he gives us of *Zoroaster*, he observes, that he thought " the Punishment of the wicked would only be between
" Death and the Resurrection; at which time he
" supposed, that being thoroughly purged and
" cleansed from their Sins, they would be restored
" to Happiness." p. 2, 14. I don't know any occasion he has to mention this here, but that he may vent his Spleen against Christianity, with respect to the endless Punishment of the wicked in a future State. This is a Doctrine taught by our Saviour, who has expressly declared, that the wicked *shall go away into everlasting Punishment*. But this Writer thinks

thinks fit to represent this Doctrine as a Piece of *Diabolism*, and as owing to the *Malice of the Jews*, who it seems invented this *eternal, implacable and inexorable Revenge*, and *herein worshipped the Devil more effectually than ever the Persians did*. And he calls it an *establishing the eternal Dominion of the Devil in Hell over the far greater Part of God's Creatures*. An odd Way this of establishing the Devil's Dominion, to say, that he shall be eternally *punished*, and be distinguished above others by the Greatness of his Punishment, as he is by his Crimes. But we are never to expect a fair Representation from this Writer of any Fact, or any Doctrine where Revelation is concern'd. I do not wonder at the Aversion some People shew to the Doctrine of the perpetual Punishment of the Wicked, which is what no good Man needs to be afraid of. But this we may plainly see, that our Author's pretended Zeal for the Doctrine of a Judgment to come, and a State of future Retributions, with which he makes a mighty Parade when it is for his Purpose to do so, come to very little: since he takes care to reduce the Punishment of the Wicked within such narrow Bounds, as if generally believed, would tend in a great Measure to free them from their Terrors; in which, what real Advantage he can propose to Mankind, or to the cause of Virtue, is hard to see. *Celsus* himself, as I had occasion to observe *, was so sensible of the Usefulness and Importance of that Doctrine which our Author sets himself to expose, that he was loth Christianity should have the honour of it, but asserted it as a common Notion that obtained almost among all Mankind. Nor is it true, that *Zoroaster* himself absolutely denied the everlasting Torments of the Wicked. He taught, as *Dr. Prideaux* informs us from the *Persian Writers*, that at the End of the World after the Judgment,

* See *Dio. Author* p. 478.

the Angel of Darkness and his Disciples should go into a World of their own, where they shall suffer in everlasting Darkness the Punishment of their evil Deeds *. And this Writer himself, tho' here he thinks fit to give it as the Doctrine of *Zoroaster*, that the Punishment of the Wicked would only be between Death and the Resurrection, at which time they would be restor'd to Happiness; yet in his Letter to *Eusebius*, he represents it as the Doctrine of *Zoroaster*, from whom the *Jews* and *Mohammed* received it, that some of the Wicked at least would be punished in Hell for ever, or to all Eternity. See *Let. to Euseb.* p. 43, 44 †.

He had expressly affirmed in his former Book, that from the days of *Moses* to the time of *Ezra*, which was a Period of about eleven hundred Years, the whole Nation of the Jews had been *Deistical Materialists or Sadducees*; and that they never embraced the Doctrines of the Immortality of the Soul, the Resurrection of the Body, a final Judgment, and a future State of Rewards and Punishments, till they received them from the *Persians* after the Captivity. I shewed the contrary from several Testimonies in the sacred Writings. He has not thought proper to consider any one of those Testimonies, but pronounces very magisterially, that all that I have offered on this Subject, is such a Run of poor Systematical Stuff, that it deserves no Notice, p. 215. But I doubt not he had a much better Reason for

* *Prid. Connect. Part. I. Book IV. p. 21. 4.*

† *Dr. Hyde* in his Preface to his Book *de Relig. vet. Pers.* speaking of the Book *Sadder*, which he represents as a Book of great Authority, extracted out of the Works of *Zerdusht*, or *Zoroaster*, and containing an authentick Account of his Doctrines, observes, "That it appoints Hell and eternal Damnation, as the Punishment for all Sins." See also to the same Purpose, cap. 33. p. 402, and 439, where the Reader may find a Passage in the Book *Sadder*, in which those who have done evil Works, are represented as kept in "a State of Confinement and Punishment to all Eternity."

taking

taking no Notice of it, and that is, that he found himself not able to answer the Evidence that was brought. It will be easily acknowledged, that the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State, is not so clearly and expressly revealed and inculcated in the Old Testament, as it is under the New; but it doth not follow that therefore it was not known or believed at all: Which yet seems to be the Course of this Writer's Argument. And as to what he adds, that *David* would not have been at such a Loss to account for the Prosperity of the Wicked, and the Sufferings of good Men in this Life, had he known any thing of a future State of Retribution, this is not a necessary Consequence: For even allowing a future State of Retributions, there will still be a great and real Difficulty in accounting for the present Dispensations of divine Providence. The grievous Calamities that often befall good Men, and the Prosperity of Tyrants and unjust Oppressors, have often puzzled contemplative Persons that have firmly believed future Retributions. And under the *Mosaical* Oeconomy, where there were more express Promises of temporal Blessings to the Righteous, the Difficulty was considerably heightened. But that *David* did believe a future State, and comfort himself with the Prospect of it, appears from the Testimonies I produced, and to which, this Writer has nothing to reply. With Respect to the celebrated Passage in *Job*, which he mentions, it cannot, without the utmost Constraint, be interpreted of a mere restoration to his former temporal Prosperity. The Expressions are as strong to signify a Resurrection of the Body as can well be supposed, nor do I see any Expressions he could have made use of to signify this, but what might have been as easily evaded as these *.

* See concerning this, Bishop *Sherlock's* Use and Intent of Prophecy Dissert. 2. And *Alb. Sculteni's* late very learned Commentary on *Job*.

Our Author concludes this Section, with telling what mighty things he could do if he pleased, to destroy the Authority of the Book of *Daniel*. But it seems the *Errors of that Book are too many and too gross to be insisted on*; and therefore he passes them over in his Tenderness, as it is to be supposed, to the Authority of the sacred Writings. Only he gives us a Hint, that the *Daniel* that was taken Captive the first of *Nebuchadnezzar*, could not be the same Person with that *Daniel* who decided the Case between *Susannah* and the *Elders* seventy seven Years after. Those that stand up for the Authority of that Story, suppose it happened in the very time of the *Babylonish* Captivity, many Years before the time this Writer is pleased to fix for it. But if that Story of *Susannah* be inconsistent with what is said in the Book of *Daniel*, it proves nothing against the Authority of that Book; it only proves that that Story is not to be depended on, which is of small Authority, and never was acknowledged by the *Jews* as belonging to the Book of *Daniel*.



C H A P. X.

The restoring the Kingdom to Israel in a temporal Sense, and the bringing all Nations into Subjection to the Jews, not an essential Character of the Messiah according to the Prophets. What he offers to prove that the Apostles were not under an Infallible Guidance examined. His Account of the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and especially the strange and absurd Representation he makes of the Gifts of Tongues, considered and exposed. Concerning the Power of working Miracles in the Apostolical Age. It did not depend upon those that had this Power, to make use of it as they themselves pleased for the Propagation of Error as well as Truth.

OUR Author begins his VIIIth Section, with assuring his Reader, that my 12th Chapter, and almost every thing that follows to the End of the Book, is little more than one continued Rant. And he had better have contented himself with some such general Answers as this to my whole Book, which would have been very near as enlightning to the World, as the Book he has now written. But after abusing me for near a Page together, he comes to vindicate what he had said concerning Jesus's disclaiming his being the Jewish Prophetic Messiah. He had expressly declared, that Jesus renounced his being the Messiah in the Sense of the Prophets, and that he died upon that Renunciation. I shewed on the contrary, that Jesus did all along, during

during the whole Course of his Personal Ministry, on all proper Occasions, declare himself to be the Christ or Messiah: That he commended the Faith of those who owned him to be such: That at his Death he avowed it in the most solemn manner before the High Priest, and the whole Jewish Council: That it was a Truth which he sealed with his Blood: That after his Resurrection he inculcated this upon his Disciples: And that whereas they were commissioned to preach the Gospel to all Nations, this was one great Article of the Gospel which they preached to the World, under the Direction of his Spirit. There is nothing in all this but what every Man knows to be true, that has ever read the New Testament. And yet this Writer still insists upon it, not only that *Jesus* was not the *Messiah* according to the Prophets; (for if he had said no more than this, he had acted the part of an unbelieving Jew, which we should not have much wonder'd at) but would face the World down by dint of Assurance, contrary to plain Fact, that *Jesus* himself disclaimed and renounced his being the *Messiah* foretold by the Prophets. The only Argument he brings for it is this, That the *Messiah*, according to the Prophets, was to be a great temporal Prince, and to restore the Kingdom to the House of David; whereas our Saviour *Jesus Christ* disclaimed all such temporal Power, and declared before Pilate, that his Kingdom was not of this World. But it doth not follow from our Saviour's declaring, that his Kingdom was not of this World, that therefore he disclaimed his being the *Messiah* foretold by the Prophets, when we have his own most express Declarations that he was so. All that follows from it is this, that since it is manifest that he all along to his Death, declared himself to be the *Christ* foretold by the Prophets, and yet did also declare, that his Kingdom was not of a worldly Nature, and that he was not a tempo-
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ral Prince, in Opposition to *Cæsar*; that therefore, if our Saviour may be allowed to be a good judge of the true Sense and Intention of these Prophecies, the *Messiah* there spoken of, was not to be merely a *temporal* Prince, nor his Kingdom to be like the Kingdoms of this World, established for secular worldly Purposes. It is true, that the *Jews* did then generally understand the Prophecies in a different Sense. They expected a *Messiah*, that was to be a *national Deliverer of Israel*, and to raise them to a mighty Degree of Power and Dominion above the Gentiles. And our Author in this takes the part of the *Jews* against our Saviour. In his Language, to be the *Messiah* in the *Jewish national Sense*, and in the *Prophetical Sense* is the same thing. See *Mor. Phil.* Vol. I. p. 331. To be the *Messiah*, and to be the *national Deliverer and Saviour of the Jews*, and the *Restorer of the Kingdom to Israel*, in a *temporal Sense*, are with him Terms of the same Signification, p. 349, 350. And accordingly he affirms over and over, that the *Jewish Christians* universally believed in Christ only as *their national Restorer and Deliverer*, p. 367, and as the *Hope and Salvation of Israel only*, or as the *Restorer of their Kingdom*, p. 377. This was the Idea he gave of the *Messiah* and his Kingdom in his former Book; and he frequently repeats it in this. He expressly again and again, declares it to be an *essential Character of the Messiah*, according to the Prophets, that he was to be a conquering Prince of the House of *David*, and the Founder of a glorious temporal Kingdom; that he was to subdue all other Nations, and bring them into Subjection to the *Jews*; to rebuild the *Temple* in a more splendid magnificent Manner than ever; and to restore their ancient *Priesthood* and Sacrifices, and the whole legal *Oeconomy*, and to extend this to *all Nations* *. And now it is

* See p. 225, 251. and Lett. to *Euseb.* p. 18, 23, 30, 31, 34, 36.

easy to see what an Idea this worthy Writer intends, as far as it is in his power, to convey to the World of our Saviour *Jesus Christ*. It is incontestably evident, that he himself claimed to be the *Messiah* foretold by the Prophets, and persisted in this Declaration to his Death; and that all the Apostles that preached the Gospel in his Name, and the Apostle *Paul* as much as any of them, taught the same thing. And yet our Author denies, that *Jesus* was or could be the *Messiah* foretold by the Prophets; for he expressly declares, and insists upon it, that he wanted an *essential Character* of the *Messiah*. And if this be not to justify the *Jews* in condemning our Lord, for falsely assuming the Character of the *Messiah*, *Matt.* xxvi. 63 — 66. *Luk.* xxii. 70, 71. it is hard to know what can be accounted so.

But as to the main Point this Writer should have proved, this he passes over as so evident, that it needs no Proof at all. *That the Jewish Messiah*, says he, according to all the Prophecies concerning him, was to be a great temporal Prince, and to restore the Kingdom to the House of David (viz. in a literal carnal sense) is so very evident, that I should scorn to dispute with a Man who would deny it, p. 220. this is pleasant enough. That is, he scorns to dispute with any Man, that will not yield him the very Point in question. And if he had scorned to write on this Subject at all, or to have troubled the World, either with his former Book or this, it would have been no Loss to Mankind, and no Disadvantage to his own Reputation. In the Books he has undertaken to answer, it was shewn, that the Kingdom attributed to the *Messiah* in the Prophets, was not like the Kingdoms of this World, in its Nature and Designs, but created for far nobler Purposes: That the principal Benefits of it, and in which the Glory of it is described, as chiefly

chiefly consisting, are *Spiritual* and *Divine*. And whereas this Writer had represented, that he was to be a *national* Deliverer and Saviour of the *Jews* only, and that *St. Paul's* preaching him up as the Author of a new Dispensation, and as the Saviour of all Men, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, was a renouncing the plain Sense of the Prophets; it was shewn from the Prophecies themselves, that the *Messiah* was to be the Introducer of a new and *spiritual* Dispensation; that his Kingdom was to be an *universal* Blessing, and that the Benefits of it and the Salvation of which he was to be the Author *, should not be confined to the *Jews*, but should extend equally to all Nations without distinction. Those Passages upon which the Notion of the *Messiah's* being a temporal Prince, and a national Deliverer of the *Jews* seems to be principally founded were considered; and it was shewn, that the narrow Sense the *Jews* would put upon them, to accommodate them to their own Prejudices and carnal Views, is contrary to the plain Design of the Prophecies, when duly considered and compared together in their just Connection and Harmony. Our Author is pleased to pass all this by, without Notice. He is apprehensive, that I may blame or censure him, for not having taken particular Notice enough of my Argument in this Chapter: But he adds, the candid Reader, I am sure, will have Good-nature enough to forgive my not doing what I could not possibly do, p. 226. And I am of Opinion, the Reader will easily believe, that if he did not take a particular Notice of the Argument so as to answer it, it was because he could not do it †.

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* See *Dis. Author*. cap. xii. *Euseb.* cap. vi.

† In his Letter to *Eusebius*, p. 19, 20, 21. he has a long Quotation out of the 60th Chapter of *Isaiah*. And he thinks a higher State of temporal Felicity and Glory cannot be conceived

He proposes, p. 226. to come to the Argument of my 13th Chapter. He had asserted, that the Apostles never so much as pretended to be under the guidance of an *infallible Spirit*; that tho' this *has been liberally granted them by our Christian Zealots and System-Mongers*, yet it was *what they themselves*

or expressed, than what *Isaiah here describes and promises with regard to that Nation*; nor could any thing be more suitable to their *vain Hopes and carnal Wishes*. He triumphs in this, as if it were alone sufficient to decide the Controversy, and introduces it, with observing that *Isaiah has here collected and put together the whole Character of the Messiah, &c. as it had been delivered occasionally by himself and other Prophets before this*. But this is not true, for there are several Parts of the *Messiah's Character*, delivered by *Isaiah* and other Prophets, which are not touched in this Chapter. I shall not so far enter on the Province of that learned Gentleman, to whom the Author addresses this part of his Book, as to enter on a particular Examination of this Passage. I shall only observe, that the universal Extent of the Church under the *Messiah*, and the *Conversion* of the *Gentiles*, is there described in noble and magnificent, but figurative Expressions. Their Accession to the true Church, and becoming the Members of it, is described by their coming to *Zion*, and bringing their Riches and Glory thither; as is their Conversion to the Worship of the true God, by their bringing Presents, Silver and Gold to the House of the Lord, and their offering Sacrifices on his Altar. This, as is usual with the Prophets, is spoken in allusion to the way of Worship that obtained under the *Mosaical Law*; tho' it appears from other Passages, both in *Isaiah* and other Prophets, that Oeconomy should be abolished under the *Messiah*. Concerning which, see *Div. Author.* p. 355, 356, 357. The Peace, the Purity, the vast Diffusion of the Church, signified here and in several other Prophecies by the Name of *Zion*, is there also described in the pompous *Figures* of the Prophetical Style. That the Words *Zion, Jerusalem, &c.* in the Prophetical Writings, are not always to be taken in the narrow Sense the Author would put upon them, is well shewn, *Euseb.* p. 509, 510, &c. see also *Div. Author.* p. 362. But all the Expressions are no more to be understood in the strict literal Sense, than when it is there said, that the *Gates of Zion shall not be shut Day nor Night*; that the *Sun should be no more her Light by Day*, nor for Brightness should the *Moon give Light* unto her; and that her *Sun should no more go down*, nor her

themselves never claimed, see Mor. Phil. Vol. I. p. 80, 81. In Opposition to this it was plainly proved from many express Testimonies, that if by *Infallibility* is meant their being under an *unerring* Guidance of the holy Spirit, so as to be kept from Error or Mistake in delivering and teaching the Doctrines and Laws of Christ, 'tis certain that this was what they claimed *. Our Author takes no Notice of these Passages ; but first repeats what he had said in his former Book, and which I had fully considered and obviated, that the *Difference* and Divisions among the Apostles, must have exposed and confuted any such Pretence ; and then observes, that if ever they had been *under the infallible Guidance of the Holy Ghost, one would have expected it when they met in Council at Jerusalem, to debate on a Point of vast Importance to the whole Church.*

her Moon withdraw itself, v. 11, 19, 20. All that can be justly gather'd from the figurative Representation, is, that a time is foretold when the Church should enjoy a State of great Peace, as well as Purity and Righteousness ; and the obstinate Enemies of Christ's Kingdom should be destroyed, or not have it in their power to harass and persecute as before. And it seems plainly to relate to the time the Apostle Paul speaks of, when the *Fullness of the Gentile* should be brought in, and *all Israel should be saved* ; and which he represents as a happy time of universal Joy, and as it were *Life from the dead, Rom. xi. 15, 25, 26, 31, 32.* This is a State of things highly to be desired, and the Prospect of which cannot but give pleasure to every well-disposed Mind. Nor is there any thing in this inconsistent with the Nature of Christianity, as this Writer insinuates. For tho' our Saviour taught his Disciples to expect *Sufferings* and Persecutions, to which he knew they would be exposed after his Death ; this does not prove that there should never be a time, when any of his Disciples in particular, or his Church in general, should be in a State of external Rest and Prosperity, and free from Persecution : And it appears from the Revelation he gave to his Servant *John*, that such a Time there shall be. This Writer may ridicule this if he pleases, and call it *Enthusiasm*, but no Man of Sense will think one jot the worse of it, for the Censure he is pleased to bestow upon it.

* See *Div. Author.* p. 371.

And yet we find no such unerring Spirit among them: Which he proves, because had they been infallible, they must have been all of one Mind, and no such Heats, Differences and Disturbances could have arisen in the Council, p. 227. There might be some Pretence for urging this, if it was alledged that all the private Christians or Believers in the Church of Jerusalem, were under the unerring Guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is evident, that in that Council not merely the Apostles were convened, but many others: That among the rest, the Judai-
 zing Teachers and Pharisees that had opposed St. Paul, were there as well as St. Paul and Barnabas. And it was but proper to hear what the one had to say as well as the other. It is also allowed, that many of the Jewish Christian Converts still labour-
 ed under great Prejudices. And it was agreeable to the Will of God, that they should be treated in a mild and condescending way, and that their Prejudices should be gradually removed. But there is nothing in the whole Account from whence it can be made appear, that the Apostles were not under the unerring Guidance of the Holy Ghost in that Council. The only Apostles of whose speaking in that Council we have any Account, besides St. Paul, were St. Peter and St. James. And they entirely harmonized among themselves, and with the Truth. It is perfectly consistent with the Supposition of an infallible Guidance, that there should be Reasoning and Deliberation in considering the Point before them; and then that God should so direct and influence their Deliberations, as to guide them unerringly upon the whole. And accordingly the Decision they came to was wise, and just, and moderate. This Author would have me explain the particular Manner in which the Apostles were inspired or illuminated; as if it were any Argument against the Truth or Reality of their being inspired, that we cannot distinctly explain

explain the Manner, in which this Revelation was communicated to their Minds. The Impertinency of this I had occasion to observe above, Chap. II. It is sufficient, that as the Apostles did profess to be unerringly guided in delivering the Doctrines and Laws of Christ, so God himself bore them *witness* that this Pretence was true, by confirming the Gospel they taught, by the most illustrious and extraordinary Attestations.

After some farther abuse, which this Writer plentifully bestows upon me, he proceeds, p. 228. to consider what I had offered, concerning the extraordinary Gifts and Powers of the Spirit. He had said, that *they who were endued with those Gifts and Powers might make either a good or bad Use of them, as much as of any natural Faculties or Talents*. But now he blames me for imagining, that he supposed, *that all, or any of them were permanent standing Qualities, like the natural Powers and Faculties of the Mind*. The contrary to this, he says, is evident enough, and that he very well knew it, *tho' he did not then chuse to speak it out*, p. 229. It seems that in his former Book it best served his Purpose to express himself, as if he looked upon them to be permanent standing Habits; and now it will best answer his End to deny that any of them were permanent standing Habits at all. But let us consider the Matter, as he is now pleased to represent it, and see what he can make of it.

P. 229, &c. he runs out into a very remarkable Excursion on the Gifts of *Tongues*. Here he throws off all Disguise, and does all that is in his power to expose Christianity, and the Proofs of it, to the Contempt and Derision of Mankind. The whole of what he says on this Head tends to shew, that this Gift was only a mad enthusiastick Impulse: That those that had or exercised this Gift could not speak those Languages at all with any

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Sense, Coherence or Consistency: That they were exactly the same with our modern French Prophets: That some of those tongue-gifted People, by Practice and Strength of Imaginations, could work themselves up into those Raptures, Extasies, and strange præter-natural Motions, and thereby lose their Reason and Senses almost at any Time; but others could not, and therefore were not so much favoured by the Spirit: That whilst they were under this mechanical Power and Operation of the Spirit, they had no Reason or Understanding left of their own. He expressly calls them frantick Fits, and declares, that they were mad or out of their Wits for the Time, p. 229—233.

The judicious Reader cannot but observe here the strange Inconsistency of this Author. He first supposes that there were extraordinary Gifts and Powers of the Spirit poured forth in the Apostolical times, and that they who had them were at liberty to use them either to good or bad Purposes; and that whenever they had those Gifts and Powers, they were left to a discretionary Use of them, p. 229. And yet immediately after represents those Gifts, particularly the Gift of Tongues, as frantick Fits of Enthusiasm, in which they quite lost the Use of their Reason and Senses, and had no Reason or Understanding left of their own, and were mad or out of their Wits for the Time. But it is hard to find any Sense or Consistency in this way of talking. This Writer is one of the first that hath supposed that a frantick Fit may be used with Discretion; and that when a Man happens to be in such a Fit, and is Mad or out of his Wits for the Time, and has no Reason or Understanding left, yet he is capable of making a Discretionary Use of that Fit of Madness, as much as any Man in his Senses can make use of any natural Faculty or Habit.

But

But let us examine more particularly the Account he is pleased to give us of the Gift of Tongues. He first pretends to consider the original Account that is given of it in the second Chapter of the *Acts of the Apostles*. The Representation he makes of what happened on the Day of *Pentecost*, is to this Purpose. That those on whom the *Holy Ghost* fell, uttered *some incoherent Words* in different Languages, *but no Man could tell in any Language, what they were talking about, or what they aimed at in such a Confusion of Voices*. And thus the whole Company stood either wondering or laughing, till Peter stood up, and in a rational coherent Discourse, let the People into the Design of all this. And upon the whole, he says, it seems very plain, that while the 120 were talking all together in different Languages, no Man in any Language could make any thing of it, or understand any thing by it, p. 229, 230.

First he asserts that there were 120 who all spoke together in different Languages, as if the Text expressly said this. But there is no Proof that there were 120 on whom the *Holy Ghost* fell, on the Day of *Pentecost**, or if there were, that all the 120 spoke at once. How many of them spoke, and in what Order we cannot tell; whether they spoke one after another in different Languages, or divided themselves among the Multitude; in which Case several of them might speak to different Persons at the

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same

* We read indeed of 120 Disciples who met together, *Acts* i. 15. but it is not likely that all these were continually together, and especially early in the Morning. In the last Verse of the preceding Chapter, we read of *Matthias's being numbered with the eleven Apostles*; and in the next Words we are told, that when the Day of *Pentecost* was come, *they were altogether in one Place*; which may well be understood, as relating to the Apostles, that had been mentioned just before. And accordingly in the xivth Verse, where we have an Account of *Peter's* beginning

same time. And any one that considers the vast numbers of Persons that were convened at *Jerusalem* at their solemn Feasts, may easily conceive, that many of them might speak at once to different parts of the Croud without Confusion. But whoever they were that spoke, it is not true which he so confidently avouches to be *very plain*, that *while they were talking in different Languages, no Man in any Language could make any thing of it, or understand any thing by it*. For we are expressly told, that the Multitude that were met together, of different Nations, said, *We do hear them speak in our Tongues the wonderful Works, or wonderful Things τὰ μεγάλα of God*. From whence it is evident, that they did understand them, and found that they discoursed about excellent and divine things, worthy of God. There were *others* indeed, that *mocking said, these Men are full of new Wine*. These probably were such, as did not understand the Languages they were speaking in, and to whom, therefore, it must appear Barbarism and Confusion; for those that understood them spoke and thought otherwise. Then *Peter* rose up, and this Author himself owns, that this Discourse was *rational and coherent*. He addressed himself particularly to the Men of *Judea*, and among other things told them, that *Jesus* whom they crucified, *being risen from the dead, and by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, he*

beginning to speak, we read only of *Peter standing up with the Eleven*, which makes it probable that they were only the twelve Apostles that were then together. And, indeed, it was to the Apostles, that the Promise of being *baptized with the Holy Ghost within a few Days*, was particularly made by our Saviour; and it was to them that the Command was directed to stay at *Jerusalem*, and wait for the Accomplishment of that Promise, as is manifest from *Acts* i. 2, 4, 5. Tho' afterwards the *Holy Ghost* was poured forth on many others, see *Acts* iv. 31. vi. 3.

bath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.

Would not this have been a fine thing to appeal to, as a demonstrative Evidence, that *Jesus* was risen and exalted at the right hand of God, and that God had *made him both Lord and Christ*; if his Disciples had only been, as this Writer represents it, like a Company of *Madmen*, all talking together a kind of Gibberish; and uttering some incoherent Words without Meaning or Connection, and with such a Confusion of Voices, that no Mortal could make any thing of what they said? The effect that followed upon it, the Conversion of 3000 Persons, who *continued stedfastly in the Apostle's Doctrine*, was an undeniable Proof of the Greatness and Wonderfulness of the Event, and what a mighty Impression it made upon those that were Witnesses to it; since it brought so many at once to acknowledge a crucified *Jesus* as the *Christ*, contrary to all their Prejudices; that is, to acknowledge one for the *Christ* or true *Messiah*, who but a little before had been condemned as a *Deceiver*, and put to an ignominious Death by the influence of the Chief Priests and Sanhedrim, whose Authority and Decisions were of so vast a Weight with all of that Nation.

The Account this Writer next pretends to give of the Gift of Tongues in the Church of *Corinth*, p. 231, 232. is equally unfair and scandalous. He represents them as a Parcel of mad *Enthusiasts* met together, that did not speak *any consistent Sense that could be understood or interpreted by any one present*; and who by *Practice and Strength of Imagination wrought themselves up into those Raptures and Extasies*, in which they had no Reason or Understanding left. He represents it as a *Mechanical Power and Operation of the Spirit*, an extraordinary powerful and blind Spirit, and that they were *out of their Wits for the Time*.

By the way I cannot but observe, what a strange Idea our Author would give the World of the Apostle *Paul*; for whom yet he frequently pretends a high Veneration both in his former Book, and in this. That Apostle begins his Epistle to the *Corinthians*, with declaring, that he *thanked God continually on their Behalf, for the Grace of God which was given them by Jesus Christ*; That in every thing they were enriched by him in all Utterance, and in all Knowledge, so that they came behind in no Gift. And that thereby the Testimony of Christ was confirmed in them, 1 Cor. i. 4—7. And throughout the whole xiith Chapter of this Epistle, he reckons up a diversity of extraordinary Gifts that were poured forth in that Age, in a wonderful Variety upon the Professors of Christianity; all which he ascribes to the divine Spirit, and to the special Operation of God himself, who had appointed them all for the good of his Church; and that he *divided these Gifts to every Man severally* according to his Will. And among these Gifts he reckons that of *Tongues*, and the *Interpretation of Tongues*. Whereas it seems these Gifts of the Spirit, of which the Apostle speaks in such high Terms, and upon which he so often lays a great Stress, as yielding an illustrious Attestation to Christianity, were only frantick Fits of Enthusiasm, wholly owing to the Strength of Imagination, and certain mechanical Operations. So that when the Apostle urges them Cha. xiv. 1, *to desire spiritual Gifts*, it was only to desire unaccountable Fits and Motions of *Enthusiasm*. And when he *thanks God that he spoke with Tongues more than they all*, v. 18, it must be understood, as signifying that he excelled them all in these frantick Fits; and had a greater Faculty than any of them had of working himself into those Raptures and Extasies, and thereby losing his Reason, and uttering Words without Sense or Coherence. Such is the Idea our
 Author

Author gives of that great Apostle of the Gentiles, who by his Account must have been one of the wildest Enthusiasts that ever lived; and so mad, that he took those Fits of Frenzy for extraordinary Operations of the divine Spirit. And this is he whom this same Writer at other times represents, as *the great Free-thinker of his Age, the bold and brave Defender of Reason against Authority* *.

I think all that have ever carefully read that Apostle's Writings, must allow that he had his Reason and Senses; and if so, he must be acknowledged to be a competent Judge of the matter of Fact, that is, that he himself had, and that there were several Persons in the Church of *Corinth*, that had the Gift of discoursing in Languages which they had never learned. Whether our Author supposes this to be a permanent *Habit*, or only an *occasional* Power of doing it when the *Afflatus* was upon them, it is impossible to account for it in a natural way, or by any Strength of Imagination, or Powers of Mechanism. If it was done at all, it must have been by a supernatural Power. They must have been inspired by some Spirit besides and above their own. And it can hardly be supposed that an evil Spirit, supposing it in his power, would have taken such Pains to give Attestation to Christianity, the manifest Design and Tendency of which was to destroy the Heathenish Superstition and Idolatry, to reclaim Men from Vice and Wickedness, and to engage them by the most powerful Motives to live *sobberly, righteously, and godly* in this present World.

Indeed if this Gift of Tongues were no more than a knack of uttering a few Words of senseless *Gibberish*, that did not properly belong to any Language, there would not be much in it. And this seems to be the Representation the Author gives of it. And what is very odd, he would fain bring in

* *Mor. Phil.* Vol. I. p. 71.

the Apostle Paul for a Voucher ; who, he tells us, speaks of this Gift, not as a speaking with different Tongues, but as an *uttering different Sounds and Voices*, and *compares it to muttering, grumbling, piping, harping and trumpeting, rather than talking in any articulate Language*. I leave it to the Reader to judge of the Candor and Sincerity of this Writer, who can make such a Representation as this of the Apostle's Sense ; as if he supposed that those that had this Gift did not really speak any Language at all, but only made a senseless *Noise*, which it was impossible for themselves or any other Person to understand. And so when he blesses God in the Passage already cited, that he could *speak with Tongues more than they all*, the Meaning is, that he thanked God, that he could *mutter, grumble, and pipe*, and speak unintelligible *Gibberish*, and make a confused inarticulate *Noise* more excellently than any of them.

But this is all gross Misrepresentation and Abuse. It is extremely evident, to any one that impartially reads that Chapter, that the Apostle all along supposes the Gift of Tongues to be a real extraordinary Gift or Power of speaking in different Languages ; that the Languages spoken by the Persons that exercised that extraordinary Gift, were intelligible to such as were acquainted with those Languages ; and that what they said was in itself good and excellent ; but what he blames some among the *Corinthians* for, is an unseasonable *Ostentation* of that Gift, by using it in the publick Assemblies before Persons that had not the Knowledge of those Languages, and therefore could not be profited by what was spoken. This he illustrates and confirms by many good Reasons. He observes, that even with Respect to the *Sounds* of inanimate Things, such as Pipe, Harp, Trumpet, they can be of no use, except People can distinguish the Tune or Sound ; much more in *Lan-
guages*

guages or articulate Sounds, which are properly designed for communicating Persons Thoughts and Sentiments to one another, care should be taken that the Words should be such, that those to whom they are spoken may understand their Meaning, which they cannot be, if they be uttered in a Language that those that hear it are Strangers to. There are, says he, *so many kinds of Voices, i. e. of Languages in the World, and none of them is without Signification.* They are all significant to those that are acquainted with those Languages; but to others they appear *barbarous*. *If I know not the Meaning of the Voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a Barbarian; and he that speaketh shall be a Barbarian unto me.* v. 10. 11. This is evidently the Course of the Apostle's Reasoning. And then speaking of such as *blessed and gave Thanks to God* in a strange Tongue; he urges, that he that *occupied the Room of the unlearned*, could not reasonably say *Amen* to it; and adds, *Thou verily givest Thanks well, καλως excellently, but the other, i. e. the unlearned that doth not understand it, is not edified, v. 16. 17.* He shews v. 22, that those Tongues were for a Sign, not to them that believed, but to them that believed not. Those that were already established in the Christian Faith, did not need this Sign to convince them, and therefore there was no need of the Exercise of this Gift in their ordinary stated Assemblies, where the faithful met together for their mutual Edification and Instruction. They were properly intended for a Sign to Unbelievers, to those that were yet Strangers to the Christian Faith, that when they saw such extraordinary Gifts poured forth upon the Professors of Christianity, they might be convinced of its divine Original. But tho' the right use of that Gift of Tongues might be of signal Advantage to Christianity, and tend to the Conviction of Unbelievers; yet if not used prudently and in an orderly manner, it might

might create Confusion in their Assemblies; and and this would expose them to their Adversaries, who if they should come into their Assemblies, and hear several of them talking in strange Languages which they knew not the Meaning of, might be ready to say they were *mad*, v. 23. He therefore gives Directions, that not above *two or three* should speak in the Church in a strange Language, and that *by course*, and that one should *interpret* what was said. But if there was no Interpreter, he that was for speaking in the strange Tongue was to *keep Silence* in the Church, v. 27, 28. This is the Sum of what the Apostle saith on this Subject; by which we may see, how different it is from the Representation this Writer is pleased to give us of it.

As to his Pretence, that those that had this extraordinary Gift of Tongues, did not *understand* what they themselves said, and that they had no Reason or Understanding left of their own, whilst they were exercising that Gift; this appears to be false, from the Account the Apostle gives of this Matter. For he expressly saith, v. 4. *That he that speaketh in an unknown Tongue, edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth, edifieth the Church.* Where it is evident, that he puts this Difference between speaking in a publick Assembly in a strange Tongue, and prophesying, or giving publick Exhortations and Instructions, in a Language known to the Hearers; that in the former Case a Man only *edified himself*, because he himself only understood what he said; but did not *edify* others, because others did not understand him: Whereas in the latter Case he *edified* others as well as himself. And therefore he saith, v. 14. *If I pray in an unknown Tongue, my Spirit prayeth, but my Understanding is unfruitful, i. e. bringeth forth no Fruit, and is of no Advantage to others.* He therefore declares, *I will*

will pray with the Spirit, and will pray with the Understanding also; that is, I will so pray with the Spirit, that my Meaning may be understood by others. And accordingly he adds, v. 19. *In the Church I had rather speak five Words with my Understanding, than ten thousand Words in an unknown Tongue.* And what he means by speaking with his Understanding, he explains in the Words immediately following, *that I might teach others also.* And for this Reason he gives it as a Rule, that he that had the Gift of Tongues should *keep silence in the Church*, if there were none to interpret. And, says he, *let him speak to himself and to God*, i. e. let him address himself to God silently in Acts of Devotion for his own Edification. Where he again supposes, that he had the Exercise of his Reason, and very well understood what he himself was to say; tho' as others could not understand it, it was better for him to keep silence in the Church, and revolve it secretly in his own Mind.

But our Author insinuates, that if a Man understood the Language himself, he might interpret it; whereas the Apostle mentions the Gift of *speaking*, and of *interpreting* Tongues, as *two different Gifts*. Upon which this Writer makes this Reflection, that *one Man was to speak in a Language which he did not understand, and could not interpret; and another was to interpret a Language which he could not speak.* It is probable he thinks this a very smart Observation. But the former part of it I have already shewn to be false. For the Apostle here plainly supposes, that those that had the Gift of Tongues, did themselves understand what they spake. And it is as plain, that those that interpreted what was spoken, did understand what they interpreted. But it is very conceivable on the one hand, that a Man may speak a foreign Language very well, and yet not be happy in rendering it readily
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and properly into the vulgar Tongue. And on the other hand, a Man may not be able to speak a foreign Language readily and fluently, and yet may understand it so as to be able to give the Sense of it readily and happily in his own. These things are really different, and the Difference between them is easily conceiveable in a natural way. And it is as conceivable, supposing these Gifts to be communicated in an extraordinary and supernatural way, that God might so order it, that some Persons might have the Gift of speaking readily and fluently in a Language which they never learned, and yet not be able readily and immediately to interpret and explain it to Advantage in the vulgar Tongue. And on the other hand, other Persons that had not the Gift of speaking so readily in those strange Languages, might yet have a happy Gift communicated to them of readily interpreting, in apt and proper Expressions, the Sense of what was thus spoken. These two Gifts were indeed frequently found in the same Persons, as is evident from v. 5. *For greater, i. e. more useful to the Church, is he that prophesieth, than he that speaketh with Tongues, except he interpret, that the Church may receive edifying.* Where it is plainly implied, that the same Persons that spoke with Tongues did sometimes at least also interpret. And therefore he exhorts, v. 13, *let him that speaketh in an unknown Tongue, pray that he may interpret*; that is, let him pray to God to give him also the Gift of aptly and readily interpreting what he spoke in the vulgar Tongue, that the other might be render'd more useful; which manifestly supposes that these Gifts often met together in the same Persons. Tho' it is plain they did not always go together; but were distributed to different Persons. See chap. xii. 10, 30. xiv. 28. And there might be wise Reasons for this, that might render it proper that those Gifts should

should be sometimes separated; tho' we do not well know those Reasons at this distance, because we are not well acquainted with the Circumstances of the Case. It is evident from the Account the Apostle *Paul* gives us of the 12th Chapter of the Epistle to the *Corinthians*, that it pleased God in that first Age, to distribute those extraordinary Gifts with great variety, *giving to every Man severally* according to his *Will*. And it might be so ordered to prevent their being too much elated on the account of those extraordinary Gifts, which as human Nature is constituted, even good Men themselves might be in danger of; and to make them more deeply sensible of their continual Dependance upon God, who alone made them to differ from one another; and that they might in their several ways be useful and necessary to each other, and to the Church; and so their mutual Harmony might be strengthened. The Apostle illustrates this with regard to this very Case of different spiritual Gifts, communicated to different Persons, by an elegant Similitude, drawn from the different Uses and Functions of the *Members* of the Body. See *1 Corinb. xii. 14—31*.

Thus I have gone through what this Writer offers with Regard to the Gift of Tongues; for as to his invective *against the lying Monks of the fourth Century* as he calls them, for pretending to give an Account of the Apostles propagating Christianity as far as *India, &c.* by the Help of the Gift of Tongues, we need not trouble ourselves much about it. Tho' we have no authentick Account of the Apostles Travels or Preaching, yet it cannot reasonably be doubted, that they did take Pains to propagate Christianity in distant Countries. Christ's Commission to them was *express to teach all Nations*, and to go *through all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature*; and it can scarce be thought, that they who had so profound a Veneration for our
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Lord Jesus, would intirely neglect the Commission he gave them. It does not appear that *all the Apostles of the Circumcision kept together in and about Jerusalem*, as he pretends, *during all St. Paul's Travels*. There is no Proof that they were all of them together there at any one time when St. Paul came thither, not even at the Council at *Jerusalem*. Or if they were, it no more proves that they were there continually, than St. Paul's being there at those times, proves that he was always there. The only Apostle that there is any reason to think resided constantly at *Jerusalem*, is St. James, who alone is mentioned at St. Paul's being the last time at *Jerusalem*, *Acts* xxi. 18. and *Luke's* Silence about the Travels and Labours of the other Apostles, which this Author urges, is no Proof at all; since he did not intend to write down the Acts of all the Apostles, but chiefly of St. Paul, whose Companion he was; and after his Conversion he takes not much Notice of any other. We find from *Gal. ii. 11*, that St. Peter was at *Antioch*, and from his own Epistle, that he was at *Babylon*; whether that be to be understood of *Babylon* properly so called, or of *Rome*, as some suppose: Yet St. Luke takes not the least Notice of either of these; so that no Argument can be drawn merely from his Silence. As to what he farther urges, *that it is not to be supposed, that these Men who were rigidly strict to the Law, should thus disperse themselves among the Heathen Nations, where they could neither eat nor drink with any body*; he can neither prove, that the Apostles were so rigidly strict to the Law as he supposes, the contrary to which has been shewn; nor if he could, would it prove, that they would not travel among the Heathen Nations for their Conversion. Since it is undeniable Fact, that those Jews who were most strict in the Observation of the Law, did yet go among the Heathens to proselyte them; and did
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actually, from time to time, turn many of them from their Idolatry. So that this Writer might have spared his Reflections here, except he could have brought some better Arguments to support them. That Christianity made a vast Progress, even in the Apostolic Age, is certain, not only from several Passages in Scripture *, as well as in Christian Writers, much elder than the fourth Century †, but from the Testimony of Heathen Writers themselves, particularly ** *Tacitus* with Regard to the Apostolic Age, and of *Pliny* for that immediately following. And considering that it had no worldly Advantages to attend it, that it had the Artifices and Influence of the Priests, the Bigotry and Superstition of the Vulgar, the inveterate Prejudices both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and the vicious Appetites and Passions of Men engaged against it; and considering the Weakness and Meanness of the Instruments, by whom it was at first propagated, and the Persecutions to which the Professors of it were exposed; it is impossible to account for the amazing Progress it made, without supposing the Truth and Evidence of those Facts on which it is founded, and especially

* *Sac. Rom.* xv. 19. *Col.* v. 6. 23. ii. 1. 1 *Pet.* i. 1 v. 13.

† I shall particularly mention that of *Justin Martyr*, who flourished in a little more than a hundred Years after the Death of our Saviour. In his Dialogue with *Trypho*, upon occasion of that Text in *Malachy*, chap. i. after having observed, that tho' the *Jews* were much dispersed, yet there were some Nations among whom none of them ever yet dwelt; he adds, *ἡ δὲ ἐν γὰρ ὅλως ἐστὶ τὸ γένος ἀνθρώπων εἴτε βαρβάρων εἴτε ἐλλήνων*, &c. There is no Nation of Men, whether Barbarians or Greeks, or by whatever Name they are called, &c. among whom Prayers and Thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Maker of all things, thro' the Name of a crucified Jesus. Allowing these Expressions to be a little hyperbolical, they shew that Christianity had then made a very wide Progress in different parts of the World.

** *Tacit. annal. lib.* 15. *Plin. Epist. lib.* 10. *Epist.* 97. *ad Trajan.*

of

of the extraordinary Gifts poured forth in the Apostlick Age; among which that of *Tongues* was very remarkable, and particularly fitted to promote the spreading of Christianity in different Nations. And if all these Apostolical Gifts had been no more than frantick Fits of Enthusiasm, and the primitive Christians were such a parcel of Madmen, as this Writer thinks fit to represent them; I am persuaded that Christianity, and its Professors, would soon have sunk into the same Obscurity with the *French Prophets*, to whom he is pleased to compare them. I had observed, that among other Gifts of the Apostolical Age, one was the Gift of *Wisdom and Knowledge*, whereby they had their Minds extraordinary enlighten'd in the Knowledge of spiritual and divine things; and that it cannot be pretended, that this was one of those Gifts, that were capable of being abused to propagate Error and Falshood. " Since
 " it is a Contradiction to suppose, that any Person
 " should by the Exercise of this Gift of divine *Wis-*
 " *dom and Knowledge*, that is, by the very actual
 " Exercise of the Knowledge of Truth, and by de-
 " claring and imparting to others, the Knowledge
 " he himself had of the Truth, promote and propa-
 " gate false Doctrine and Error." Our Author makes himself very merry with this, and thinks it is not *possible for any Man to read it and forbear laughing*. But the Ridicule turns upon himself. The Supposition he had made in his former Book, concerning the extraordinary Gifts in the Apostolic Age was this: That *those that were endued with those Gifts, might make either a good or bad Use of them, as much as of any natural Faculties or Talents*. Where he evidently runs a Parallel between *natural Faculties and Talents*, and the Apostolical Gifts, and supposes them to be alike in this; that they were equally capable of being applied to good or ill Purposes. This will easily be allowed with Regard to natural Faculties and Talents.

Talents. For when a Man uses those Talents, *e. g.* his Judgment, Fancy, Sagacity, Eloquence, to promote Error and Vice, he as really uses his Faculties and Talents, as if he employed them in the Cause of Truth and Virtue, only he makes a wrong or bad use of them. But the Case is different with Regard to some of the Apostolical *Gifts*. They were not like natural Faculties, which may be really used and exercised, and in that Use and Exercise be applied to promote Error as well as Truth. But they were of such a Nature, as if really used and exercised at all, could only serve the Cause of Truth. Of this Kind I reckoned the Gift of divine Wisdom and Knowledge, which included the illuminating of their Minds with the actual Knowledge of divine Truth. Now it is manifest, that when ever this Gift was really exercised, it could only serve the Cause of Truth. Knowledge may be used to promote Error, but the Knowledge of Truth cannot. And the contrary Supposition is absurd and self contradictory.

P. 235. He allows that the Power of working Miracles, was not a *permanent* abiding Habit to be exercised at any time, and at mere Will and Pleasure; that it was not constant, but occasional; yet he asserts, that “ whenever they had this Power, “ and could exercise it, as they were free Agents in “ it, they might make a good or bad use of it, as “ much as of any natural Power they had, and in “ the Exercise of which they were free, p. 236.” But if the Apostles did not work Miracles by their own Power, but by the immediate Impulse and Agency of the divine Spirit, and could never perform those Miracles at any time but when he thought fit to enable them to do them; it is absurd to the last degree, to suppose that they could exercise that Power for such Purposes as they themselves pleased, contrary to the Mind of the Spirit by whom they were at that time

enabled to exercise it. If therefore they should have attempted at any time to work such Miracles; in Confirmation of Falshood, they must have immediately have failed in the Attempt; except we suppose the *Spirit* himself, by whose Influence these Miracles were wrought, and on whose Will it depended, when they should work them, intended to confirm Falshood, and lent his Power for that Purpose. To suppose which of a good Spirit, which is the present Supposition, is a manifest Inconsistency. As to his insinuation, p. 235, as if the Efficacy of the Miracles depended on *the Faith of healing*, which he thinks *Madmen and Lunaticks might have in a higher degree than others, as they had the greatest Force of Imagination*; I would know when the *Dead* were raised, as *Eutychus* was by the Apostle *Paul*, and *Dorcas* by *St. Peter*, whether the Faith and Imagination of these dead Persons did also co-operate to their being raised again? Or, did the Faith of the *impotent* Man, that had been Lame from his Mother's Womb, *i. e.* his Belief that the Apostles would give him Money, for this was all he expected from them; did this Imagination of his enable them in an instant, by a word speaking, to restore him to the perfect use of his Limbs? *Acts* iii. 4. 5, 6, 7, 8. But I shall say no more of this here, having taken notice of it before; and besides, our Author is pleased afterwards to own, p. 236, *That the Cure of a Fever, or any common Distemper, by a touch or word of Command, must be allow'd to be very extraordinary and miraculous.*

C H A P. XI.

The Author's attempt to vindicate what he had said concerning the Apostle's preaching different Gospels, shewn to be vain and insufficient. His Censures on the Apocalypse considered. The Doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction farther vindicated against his Exceptions. His concluding Attempt to prove that there are plain marks of Imposture in the Law of Moses, and particularly that it was calculated to advance the carnal worldly Interest of the Politician, and that it gave a large Indulgence to personal Intemperance, and the Lusts of Uncleanness. The strange Representations he makes of the Law of Jealousy. The Injustice of his Reflections upon it shewn. The Conclusion.

THIS Writer had in his former Book made a mighty Noise, about the *different Gospels* preached by the Apostles. He had given a formal Account of the *Jewish Gospel*, which he pretends was taught by all the Apostles but St. Paul. This pretended *Jewish Gospel* was shewn to be entirely his own Fiction *. It highly concerned him therefore, since he had laid so great a Stress upon it, to vindicate what he had offered on this Head, if he had been able to do it. And he assures us, in the Contents of his *ninth* Section, which I am now going to consider, that he has proved, that there was a real Separation between Peter and Paul, *occasioned by the different Gospels they preached*. One would therefore have

* See Div. Author. p 393—398.

expected here some *Vindication* of his *Jewish* Gospels, but nothing of this appears. He cries out as his custom is, against *Systems* and *School-Divinity*, which to be sure is very pertinent to the Point in debate. And then he answers all that I had said, by asking a few Questions, which he supposes, must take me three or four Volumes more to answer. One of them relates to the long and warm Debates in the *Jerusalem Council*; but how this will prove a *Difference* among the Apostles is hard to see. Since it appears there was an intire *Harmony* among them, and that they all concurred in condemning the false *Judaizing Teachers*, as subverting Men's Souls, and in absolving the Gentiles from the Observation of the Law of *Moses*. He next mentions *Paul's* withstanding *Peter* to the Face, and charging him with *Prevarication* and *Inconsistency*. But this doth not prove that they preached different Gospels. On the contrary, it appears evidently from that very Passage, that *St. Peter* did not believe the absolute Obligation of the ceremonial Law more than *St. Paul*; that the Difference between them was not about any point of Doctrine; but because *Peter*, for fear of giving Offence to some of the *Jews* that came from *Jerusalem*, declined eating openly with the Gentiles as he had done before; for this he was blamed by *St. Paul*. And this Apostle in what he said to him on that Occasion, proceeds upon it as an uncontested Truth, in which he and *St. Peter* were agreed; that we are justified, not by the Works of the Law, but by Faith in *Jesus Christ*. Gal. ii. 15, 16. Our Author's next Question supposes, that *James* sent down his *Jewish Zealots* to *Antioch*, after the Decree of the Council, to insist upon *Circumcision* and *Obedience to the whole Law*. But this cannot reasonable be supposed, since we find that *James* himself, was one of the Principal of those that in the Council of *Jerusalem*, argued for exempting

empting the Gentiles from those things, and joyned in branding those as *Troublers* of the Churches, and *Subverters* of Men's Souls, that insisted upon it. And afterwards we find him representing it as a fixed Point, agreed and concluded upon, that the *Gentiles should observe no such things*, Acts xxi. 25. Our Author's following Questions, go upon these Suppositions; *That Peter and Paul broke upon this, and a Schism in the Church happened upon it, during the whole Apostolical Age*; the absolute Falshood of which, was clearly and fully shewn in my former Book, to which he has not been able to make the least Reply*. That St. Paul long after this, in his Epistle to the Galatians, mentions Peter personally, and by name, five or six times, as the Head and Ringleader of those Judaizers; and that he openly and plainly charges the Judaizing Apostles and Teachers, by which this Writer means all the Apostles of our Lord, except St. Paul himself, as false Apostles and Teachers, and for usurping the Ministry, which had been wholly left to him. All this is purely Fiction, since on the contrary, it is evident from the Account St. Paul himself gives, that there was an intire Harmony and Agreement between him, and the other Apostles, of whom St. Peter was one of the chief. That they approved his Doctrine, and owned his divine Mission; and he plainly distinguishes between the Apostles, and those whom he calls *false Brethren*, who came in *privily to spy out their Liberty*. Gal. ii. 2—10. Thus I have gone thro' the Author's Questions, which, with the Invectives he is pleased here to bestow very plentifully upon me, and which it is neither worth my while, nor the Reader's, to take the least notice of, is all that he offers to shew, that the Apostles preached different Gospels; and must pass for a full Answer to the clear and direct Proofs I had brought to the contrary.

* See *Divine Author*. p. 401. 420, 421.

He goes on, p. 240. &c. to say something again about the *Jerusalem Council*, and repeats what he had said in his former Book; that the *Jerusalem Council* enjoined the Law of *Profelytism*, upon the *Heathen Gentile Converts*; and this Law of *Profelytism*, he explains to be a total absolute separation from the rest of the World, with Regard to Eating, Drinking, Cohabitation, Intermarriages, &c. He should have told us, from what Memoirs he comes to know, that the *Jerusalem Councils* enjoined this upon the Gentile Converts. For it is certain, there is no mention of any such Injunction, in the Account given us of that Council, in the Acts of the Apostles; nor of the *Difference and Schism* between them and St. Paul, which he assures us this was the occasion of. But there is one part of this pretended Decree, which if it had been made in that Council, that Apostle certainly would not have been against, and that is, the forbidding Intermarriages between the Christians and the idolatrous Gentiles. For it is evident from what he saith, 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16. that he very much disapproved and condemned those Marriages, between Believers and Unbelievers.

P. 241, 242. He feigns a State of the Case at that Council, that is neither true in Fact, nor if it were, would be any thing to the Purpose at all. He represents it, as if the occasion of the Council was, that the *Judaizing Teachers*, who urged Circumcision and the Observation of the Law upon the Gentiles, were willing that those among the Gentiles, that had been *Profelytes of the Gate*, at the time of their Conversion to Christianity, should be admitted into the Church and to all its Privileges, equally with the Jews, without being circumcised. But that they would not admit those that had been converted to Christianity, from being *idolatrous Gentiles*, to come into the Church without Circumcision. But this is intirely his own Imagination. Those *Judaizing Teachers* that
that

that came to *Antioch*, laid it down as a universal Rule concerning all the Gentile Converts, that *except they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved*. This they urged upon the Brethren at *Antioch*, a Church that had been originally founded, not by *St. Paul*, but by some that came from *Jerusalem*; and which seems to have been chiefly gathered out of such as had been *Profelytes of the Gate*; see *Acts* xi. 20, 21, 22, 25. tho' no doubt, there were also many among them, that had been *idolatrous Gentiles* at the time of their Conversion. Accordingly, the Question before the Council, proceeded concerning all the *Gentile Converts* without distinction. And *Peter*, in his arguings upon it, puts them in mind that *God had chosen him long before, that the Gentiles should hear by his Mouth the Word of the Gospel and believe, and put no difference between them and the Jews*, *Acts* xv. 7, 8, 9. where he calls *Cornelius* and those that were with him, tho' they were *Profelytes of the Gate*, and not *Idolaters, Gentiles*; and *St. James* speaking of the same thing, calls them *Gentiles* too, *v.* 14. Indeed all the *Profelytes of the Gate*, had been once *idolatrous Gentiles*, and after being turned from their *Idolatry*, were still called *Gentiles*; and were not taken at all into the *Peculium of the Jews*, nor regarded as belonging to their body, without being circumcised. And therefore the *Judaizing Teachers* were not for having them, or any other from among the *Gentiles*, to be taken into the *Christian Church* without being circumcised. They were for having the *Observation of the Law*, urged as necessary upon all the *Gentile Converts* without exception. And the Council was for having all the *Gentile Converts* without distinction *exempted* from it. In this all the *Apostles and Elders* agreed, and passed a severe *Censure* upon those false Teachers, that had urged the *Necessity of Circumcision*. So that what was

done at that Council, instead of proving that there were Differences among the Apostles, or between the other Apostles and St. *Paul*, which is what the Author brings it for, furnishes a manifest Proof that there was an entire Harmony among them. Nor has this Writer been able to produce any thing to the contrary ; but after repeating what he had said before, and what has already been considered, concerning St. *Paul's* blaming *Peter* at *Antioch*, flies out into some wild talk concerning *Peter's* Infallibility, when he denied his Master, &c. See p. 243, 244. And then leaves his Argument concerning the Difference between the Apostles, and the different Gospels they preached, to shift for itself as well as it can.

He next proceeds to vindicate what he had said, with Regard to the *Apocalypse*, and represents me, as undertaking to prove that it is not the *Christian Revelation* ; as if I denied it to be a sacred Book of the New Testament ; because I would not allow it to be the whole of the *Christian Revelation*, as he had absurdely insinuated, because it has the Word *Revelation of Jesus Christ* in the Title.

What he offers here is so strangely loose, that the Difficulty lies not in confuting it, but in reducing it to any thing that can look like Argument. He had asserted, that that Book teaches the mediatorial *Worship* of Saints and Angels, and Prayers for the dead : That the *Christian Jews* soon fell into gross *Idolatry*, and set up a great number of Mediators and Intercessors with God instead of One. And this he pretended to prove from the *Apocalypse* ; and the Proof he brought was because the Twenty-four Elders, whom he supposed to be the principal Angels, are represented as having golden Censers in their Hands full of Incense, which is the Prayers of the Saints. But it was shewn, that those Elders were not to be understood of the Angels,

Angels, nor of departed *Saints*; but that it was designed as a figurative Representation of the State of the *Church* on Earth, and the Prayers offered up to God there. And it is evident to any one that hath considered that Book, that *Heaven*, and the *Temple*, and *Altar* there, often signifies in this Prophecy, the visible *Christian Church* on Earth, and the *Worship* there performed. Our Author hath nothing to offer against this; but to fly out against the Prophetick Language and Stile, as something that cannot be made common Sense of. But tho' the Stile be *figurative*, and he that would take all the Expressions of that Book *literally*, would shew himself as absurd as this Writer has done; yet it doth not follow, but that by a careful comparing one thing with another, and considering the *Genius* of the Prophetick Stile, we may come to know the *Design* of those Expressions. And many learned Men, every way superior to this Writer, and much better Judges of Good Sense than he can reasonably pretend to be, have very profitably employed their Pains this way, and found not only a good, but a *sublime* and useful Sense. And notwithstanding the Obscurities of this Book, there have been many noble Discoveries made from it, that affords an illustrious Proof of the Extent of the Divine Foreknowledge, and of the Truth and Reality of Prophecy.

This Writer makes himself merry with my having said, that *the Word Angel admits of so many Senses in that Book, that no Argument can be drawn from it* *. The plain Design of which was, that no Argument can be drawn *merely* from that word, as if whenever it occurs in that Book, it is to be understood *literally* of *Angels* properly so called, since it is evident, that this Expression is often used, where *Angels* properly so called, are not intended

* See *Dr. Author*. p. 428.

to be represented by it, of which I gave some Instances. But tho' that Word is there taken in very different Senses, yet for the most part, by a careful Consideration of the Circumstances of the Context where it is used, we may come to know the Meaning of it; and if in some particular Passages we cannot be certain as to the precise Meaning of it, it will only follow, that no Argument can be drawn from it, as used in those Passages; which may be safely allowed, since there are many Passages in that Book, that we do not precisely know the Meaning of; and yet this doth not hinder, but that there are other Passages plain enough, and of special Use. One of which I take to be that of the Angel forbidding *John* to worship him, tho' it could only be an inferior Worship that *John* intended. And it is an odd thing for this Writer to attempt to prove the Worship of Angels from that Book, in which it is as clearly *forbidden*, as in any one Passage in the whole Scripture.

As to *Prayers for the Dead*, he pretends I have admitted of it so far as he had urged it from the Authority of the Apocalypse. I had shewn that what this Author would put upon us as a Proof of Prayers for the Dead, has nothing in it but what is very agreeable to Reason, and what no understanding Protestant ever denied. And now he does not so much as undertake to shew the Absurdity of it; but talks of the primitive Christians in the first Ages, as supposing the Souls of the departed Saints, to be *hovering about their Tombs and Sepulchres*, in which he abuses them as well as *St. John*; since tho' they did not suppose them to be admitted into the full Glory of *Heaven*, till the Resurrection, yet they supposed them to be in a *Paradise*, a State of Rest and Peace.

He had asserted, that the Author of this Book *confines Salvation to the Jews only*, and that according
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to him, *not one Gentile was to be saved.* Mor. Phil. Vol. I. p. 372. The contrary to this was plainly proved by exprefs Passages out of the Book itself, to which our Author has nothing to answer; but according to his laudable custom, still persists in affirming what he had said before. He declares that *the whole Jewish Nation* excluded even the devout Gentiles, or *Profelytes of the Gate*, from any possibility of Salvation, till they became *Profelytes of Righteousness*, and conformed to the whole Law; and that the Christian *Jews* made the entrance still narrower, and excluded all from hope of Salvation, who did believe *Jesus* to be the true national *Prophetic Messiah*; that is, *a mighty conquering Prince of the House of David, who was to subdue all other Nations under them.* And so he goes on after his way, to assert that this was the *Idea* under which the Prophets represented the *Messiah*; see p. 250, 251. which he had said several times before, and which has been already considered.

He concludes this Section with assuring his Reader, that by my own acknowledgment the *Prophetic Stile and Language* are unintelligible; and then urges, that it is *impossible to convince the Jews that they mistook their Prophets*; whereas it is both certain that great numbers of the *Jews*, at the first Promulgation of the Gospel, were convinced by those Prophecies; and that many of the *Jews* since have been convinced by them, of some of which Mr. Chapman has given him a particular Account. As to what he adds, that it is *impossible* for me, by all my *Shifts and Evasions*, to convince him that he has *mistaken the Prophets*, p. 254. I will readily agree, that it is impossible to make him own that he is convinced, or that he has ever been in the wrong, in any one thing he has advanced; but I am satisfied that it is very easy to convince the rest of the World of this.

In

In his last Section, he proposes to consider what I had offered concerning the Satisfaction of Christ. He saith this is a *turning Point*, and almost the *Hinge of the whole Controversy*, and that therefore he will more particularly consider all that I had offered about it. One would expect after this, that he should have entered on a distinct Examination of the Argument, and yet he passes it over without so much as taking off the Force of any thing I had offered, in answer to his Objections.

He again represents it as a *perfect Inversion of all Order and Justice*, that the *Imocent should suffer for the Guilty*; that *Merit and Demerit are incommunicable Adjuncts*, and not transferable from one Person to another; that it is impossible to urge the Doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction in any way whatsoever, so as not to have a *mischievous Effect*, as encouraging *Presumption*, quieting Men in their Sins, and bearing off *Repentance*. These things he had urged more largely and strongly before; and they have been particularly considered; and as he has not vouchsafed to take the least notice of what was offered on these Heads, I shall refer the Reader to my former Answer.

He still insists upon it, that he had fully proved, that there were no vicarious Sacrifices under the Law of Moses; and that a Man's offering a Sacrifice did not exempt him from any other *Mulct, Fine, or Penalty in Law*. And he is the more sure of this, because I have not been able to give any Instance to the contrary. And yet I shewed, that in Cases where Sacrifices were appointed to be offered, a Man was always exempted from any *Fine, Mulct, or Penalty*. That the Sacrifice under that Constitution was always supposed to avert the Penalty, which would otherwise have been due. But he urges, that *Sacrifices were a part of legal Obedience*, and therefore they could not possibly typify and represent any real Propi-

Propitiation or Sacrifice for Sin, p. 261. That
 “ what was called *making the Atonement* by the
 “ Priest’s sprinkling the Blood, could signify no-
 “ thing but *declaring the Atonement*, or giving
 “ this open, publick, and legal Notification of it,
 “ that the Persons Sacrifice was accepted, and that
 “ by this personal Act of Obedience to the Law,
 “ he stood acquitted in Law. It was in the nature
 “ of a legal Discharge, that the Law by such an
 “ Offering, or personal Act, was satisfied to that
 “ time.” p. 263. It will easily be acknowledged,
 that the offering the Sacrifice, in Cases where Sacri-
 fices were appointed by the Law to be offered, was
 an Act of *Obedience* to the Law; and that upon of-
 fering the Sacrifice in such Cases in the proper man-
 ner, the Person was acquitted and discharged in
 Law, from the Guilt he was supposed to have con-
 tracted, and the Law was satisfied. But does this
 prove, that therefore there was no *Atonement* sup-
 posed to be made by those Sacrifices? It proves the
 very contrary. And it is a strange way of reasoning,
 that because the Law required a Sacrifice to be of-
 fered as an atonement, in order to the obtaining legal
Remission, and upon offering the Sacrifice, a Man
 did obtain legal Forgiveness; therefore the Sacri-
 fice made no legal Atonement, or was not supposed
 to make an Atonement in Law?

As to what he adds, p. 264, that “ in like
 “ manner, Jesus Christ by his Obedience to Death,
 “ and shedding his Blood upon the Cross, gave a
 “ publick authentick Declaration, or Notification,
 “ of the Acceptableness of such personal Obedience,
 “ as the true Righteousness that God would accept
 “ or reward.” I do not see how Christ’s suffering and
 dying, could be said to be a *Notification* of the Ac-
 ceptableness of his Obedience and Death; it was
 his Resurrection and Glorification, that was the pro-
 per Notification of this; and therefore if his Death

or

or shedding his Blood, is represented as a Propitiation, on no other Account than that it publickly notified the Acceptableness of his Obedience, his *Resurrection* may be more justly called a Propitiation or Atonement, which yet it never is in Scripture.

But he urges, *p. 260.* That “ *there is not one word in Scripture of Christ’s dying to reconcile God to us, or to dispose him to be merciful to penitent Sinners;*” nor do those Systematical Divines, over whom he triumphs on all occasions, suppose that Christ died to *dispose God to be merciful to us*; but it was because he was disposed to be merciful to us, that he sent his Son *Jesus Christ* to die, and give himself a Sacrifice for our Sins. He adds, that there is not one word in Scripture of Christ’s dying to *procure or merit Pardon* upon our Repentance, or to manifest and display *the Justice and Righteousness of God, and his hatred of Sin.* But we are told in Scripture, that Christ’s Blood was *shed for the remission of Sins*; that in him we have *Redemption through his Blood, even the remission of Sins*; that his Blood *cleanseth from all Sin*; that God hath set him forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness in the remission of Sins, that God might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus; that God hath made him to be Sin, or a Sin-offering for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him; that is, that we might be justified through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ, as it is elsewhere expressed: That Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. And many other Passages might be produced to the same Purpose. And what Sense can be made of these, and such like Expressions upon our Author’s Scheme, I cannot see.

But the most formidable Objection is still behind. He has a good deal of talk, *p. 259, 260,* to shew how much the World must be obliged to the igno-

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rant and wicked Jews upon the Mediatorial Scheme; and how hard it is to censure or condemn them for doing a thing, that was necessary to be done for the Salvation of Mankind; and which God had before ordained and appointed to be done. But this sagacious Writer does not reflect, that if this way of talking were just, it would bear as hard upon the Scheme he pretends to espouse, as upon that which he thinks fit to oppose. He himself says, that it is *clear and intelligible enough, how a whole Nation, or the whole World, may derive vast Advantages from the Sufferings and Hardships of a particular Person, p. 259.* And will he say, that upon such a Supposition, the World would be obliged for these *vast Advantages* to them that inflicted those Sufferings and Hardships upon that Person? He had in his former Book mentioned several Advantages, arising from the Death of Christ; and particularly, that it was of great Benefit, as he was a glorious *Martyr*, that died to confirm the truth of his Doctrine, and as he thereby exhibited an admirable and useful Example. And must we thank the Jews, and own our great Obligation to them for all this? This it must be owned, is a very extraordinary way of talking. And so whenever God, in his infinite Wisdom, over-rules the *Wickedness of Mankind*, which he perfectly foresaw, but of which he is not the Author and the Cause, and brings the most eminent Good out of it, the thanks must be given to the wicked Actors, tho' they were prompted to what they did, merely by their own Malice, rather than to that supreme Wisdom and Goodness, which, contrary to their Intention, brought so much Good out of that Evil. But he asks, if Christ had not suffered from the *Jews, must the whole World have been damned?* This goes upon the modest Supposition of God's *Prescience* being disappointed, and then what would have been done next? I will not pretend

tend to say what might have been done, or what Method God, in his inexhaustible Wisdom, might have fixed upon for *dispensing* his Mercy towards sinful Mankind; but as he has taken this way of doing it, I am satisfied that it is best, and most wisely, and fitly ordered. And it does not prove that God did not take this Method, because if he had not taken this Method, he would have fixed upon another. It does not prove, that Christ did not suffer and die to make Atonement for our Sins, because if he had not suffered and died, he had made no Atonement for our Sins, by his Sufferings and Death: But such is our Author's admirable Reasoning. And at this rate it must be said, that Christ did not die to leave us an *Example*, which yet this Writer pretends to own he did, because if he had not died, he had not left us an Example by his Death. But I need say no more on this head of Christ's Satisfaction, which was so largely considered in my former Book, and which this Writer here so slightly passes over.

He concludes this Section, and his Book, so far as I am concerned in it, with a virulent *Invective* against the Law of *Moses*, which he assures us, has all the Marks and Characters of *Imposture*, mentioned by Dean *Prideaux* in his Letter to the Deists, and applied by him to the Religion of *Mahomet*. And first he affirms, p. 265, 266, that "the whole Plan and Contrivance of this Polity, was calculated and directed for the temporal carnal Interests, Wealth, and Power of the Politician, by securing the Government for ever in his own Tribe and Family."

As to *Moses's* own Family, I think he gave the greatest Proof of his *Disinterestedness*, and how far he was from any worldly ambitious Views; since notwithstanding his vast Authority and Interest with the People, tho' he left two Sons, he did not raise

raise either of them, or their Children to any Dignity at all, but left them to continue undistinguished among the common *Levites*, whose Business was only to minister about the Sanctuary, in inferior Offices under the Priests. And accordingly they and their Descendants continued in Obscurity, nor do we find they made any Figure at all. It is true the Priesthood was vested in the Family of *Aaron* by that Constitution, who was *Moses's* Brother. But if *Moses* had been acted by a Spirit of Ambition, and a desire of advancing the Power and Grandeur of his Family, as this Writer represents it, was it not natural to expect, that he should have in the first place, taken care of his own immediate Progeny? Or, if he had admitted *Aaron* and his Family to a share of the Priesthood, that he would not have excluded his own for ever from it, which yet we find he did? But *Moses* in the Constitutions he made, was only governed by the Directions he received from God, and was faithful to him that appointed him, without any Regard to his own private Interests. As to what this Writer so often insinuates, as if the Government was vested in the Tribe of *Levi* by the *Mosaic* Constitution, this has been shewn to be false. When *Moses* appointed Judges, who were to discharge the Office of Magistrates among the People, both the inferior Judges, who were to determine lesser Matters, and the seventy Elders, that were appointed for Causes of a higher Nature, in neither of these Appointments was there any peculiar Regard to the Tribe of *Levi*; but they were chosen out of all the Tribes. When he died, he did not leave the chief Government, either in his own, or Brother's Family, or in his own Tribe, but left it in the Hands of *Joshua*, whom he appointed to succeed him; and in whom the supreme Power was vested. Nor was there any Direction in the Law, that the succeeding Governors should be of the Tribe

of *Levi*. And in fact, none of the *Judges* were ever chosen out of that Tribe, except *Eli* and *Samuel*. And as to their *Kings*, all the Direction *Moses* gives as to their chusing them, is, that they should chuse *one from among their Brethren*, without confining them to any particular Tribe, *Deut.* xvii. 15. And by the Prophecy he mentions of dying *Jacob*, he seems plainly to fix the chief Authority in the Tribe of *Judah*. *Gen.* xlix. 8, 10. And in fact, we find that when they came to have *Kings*, they were not taken from among the *Priests*, as it was in *Egypt*, where their *Kings* were usually *Priests* *. As to what he farther adds here, concerning the legal Revenues of the Priesthood, amounting to an *annual Rent*, or a *third Part of the whole Produce of the Land*; and that the Tribe of *Levi* alone, *must have been almost double in Wealth and Power, to all the rest of the Tribes together, and able to maintain a War against them*; this depends upon the Truth of his own Calculations, the Unfairness and Absurdity of which hath been sufficiently shewn.

The Author's next Observation to prove the Marks of Imposture in the Law of *Moses*, is, because by the Constitution of that Law, the Tribe of *Levi* were to be *dispersed thro' the whole Country*. But this is a Proof of nothing but the strong Prejudices he hath against the *Priests* and *Levites*. For if the Law was excellent, and fitted to make the People happy, and to direct them in the true Worship of God, and the Practice of universal Righteousness, as it certainly was; and if the proper Business of the *Priests* and *Levites*, was to instruct the People in the Knowledge of the Law, as is evident from many Passages †, then it was a very wise and good Constitution, that the *Priests* and *Levites*

* See *Plutarch de Isid. et Osirid.*

† See *Lev.* x. 11. *Deut.* xxxiii. 10. 2 *Chron.* xvii. 8, 9. xxx. 22. *Neb.* viii. 7, 9. *Mal.* ii. 4, 2.

should

should be *dispersed* through the several Tribes, for the Instruction of the People. As to what he adds, p. 267. concerning the Law for punishing *Idolatry* with Death, and concerning the Worship of the *Local, Tutelar God of Israel*, this hath been fully considered.

But he farther argues, p. 267. that *the Indulgence given under this Oeconomy to personal Intemperance, especially the most predominant and prevailing Lusts of the Flesh, Drunkenness, and carnal Concupiscence, or the excessive use of Wine and Women, is another strong and glaring Mark of worldly carnal Policy.* And he observes, p. 271. that as *the Priesthood must have been very burdensome and expensive to the Nation, it was but reasonable and fit, that they should be indulged in some carnal Liberties, and peculiar personal Enjoyments, the better to reconcile them to, and make them the more easy under such a divine Oeconomy.* Any one that was to judge of the *Mosaic* Constitution, by this Writer's Representation of it, would be apt to think, that in that Law there was an Allowance for Intemperance and Debauchery, in order to make the People easy under their other Burdens. But I doubt not the Reader is before now fully convinced how little Stress is to be laid upon any thing he affirms, tho' with never so great Confidence. As to *Drunkenness*, he himself seems in this very Book to acknowledge that *Moses* condemns it, and denounces the Judgments of God against it; tho' he pretends he does this, not as a *Lawgiver*, but as a *Prophet* and *Preacher of Righteousness*. And whereas he says, a *Man* might be as drunk as he would, and as often, without incurring a legal Punishment; it is certain that in the Case of the rebellious Son, brought by his Parents before the Magistrates, his being a *Glutton and a Drunkard*, is particularly mentioned, as a Reason of the severe Punishment that was to be inflicted on him.

Deut. xxi. 20, 21. With Regard to the Encouragement he pretends was given in that Oeconomy to carnal Concupiscence, he represents it, as if a Man were allowed by Law to keep as many Wives and Concubines as he thought fit, and turn them off again at pleasure; to take fresh Ones, and glut his Lust with the greatest Variety. But this also is very unfairly represented. In the Mahometan Law, indeed it is expressly allowed to every Man to have four Wives, besides which, they are allowed to lie with their Maid-Servants as often as they are pleased, see *Alcor.* chap. iv. lxvi. And accordingly, ever since the time of Mahomet, it hath been an established Law among them, to keep as many Women-Slaves for their Lust, as they think fit to buy; and the Children of the one, are as legitimate as the Children of the other. And this is not to be wondered at, since Mahomet himself was noted for Lust and Impurity, and forged Revelations from God, expressly approving his Adulteries, and allowing him to indulge his Lusts without Controul; and to marry as many Wives as he should think fit, and those even of his near Relations, the Daughters of his Brother, or the Daughters of his Sister, see *Alcor.* chap. xxxiii. But Moses was of a quite different Character. He could never be charged with the least Stain of Impurity. Nor is there any Encouragement given to it in his Law; but much to the contrary. Great Care is there taken to curb and restrain Men's exorbitant Lusts. Adultery is forbidden in the strongest manner, and under the severest Penalties, *Lev.* xx. 10. *Deut.* xxii. 22, 23, 24. So are all Rapes, *Deut.* xx. 25. 27. And where a Person enticed a Virgin that was not married, tho' he did not force her, but prevailed with her to consent, he was obliged to marry her, if her Father pleased; and if not, was to give her a Dowry. *Exod.* xxii. 16, 17. All Fornication is expressly forbidden in that Law; whereas it was generally

rally indulged and allowed in the Laws of other Countries. There was to be no *Whore of the Daughters of Israel*. And the Reason is given, *least the Land should fall to Whoredom, and become full of Wickedness*. And to shew how odious this was in the Sight of God, *the Hire of a Harlot* was expressly forbidden to be brought into the House of the Lord for any Vow. And it is declared, that *this is an Abomination unto the Lord*. See *Lev. xix. 29. Deut. xxiii. 17, 18*. So that the Priests were not allowed to receive the Money, or Offerings, that were the Price of Whoredom. Nor was there any Expedient in that Constitution, for a lewd Woman's pretending to compensate for her Wickedness, by making a Present of a Part of her Gains to the Church. And how different was this from the Heathen Customs, among whom, in many Places, Whoredom and Impurity made a part of the Worship of their Deities! There were Women that prostituted themselves, kept in the publick Temples, and the Rewards of their Impurity were offered to their Gods*. Under the *Mosaic* Constitution, no Man was allowed to abuse his Slaves to his Lust, as in the *Mahometan* Law. Even with Regard to *Captives* taken in War, they were not permitted to violate them. But if an *Israelite* fell in Love with

* *Sextus Empyricus* informs us, that among many of the *Egyptians*, it was *ex Actis* glorious for Women to prostitute themselves. *Pyr. Hyp.* lib. 3. cap. 24. *Strabo* acquaints us, that at *Corinth* there was a Temple, that maintained more than a thousand Whores, *ισοδούραις* *et alias*, *Whores consecrated to the Service of the Goddess*. *Geogr.* lib. viii. And he tells us that at *Comana*, a City of *Cappadocia*, there were Whores consecrated to the Moon, whom they there worshipped, lib. xii. And *Herodotus* observes, concerning the ancient *Babylonians*, that there were many Women that sat at the Gates of the Temple, and prostituted themselves for Hire, and that the Money that was thus obtained, was wont to be dedicated to sacred Uses. *Herod.* lib. i. cap. 199.

a beautiful Captive, he was obliged to take her Home and marry her, after having allowed her a proper Space to bewail her Father and Mother, *Deut. xxi. 10 — 15.*

With regard to *Polygamy*, some very learned Persons have been of Opinion, that that Passage, *Levit. xviii. 18.* is designed to prohibit it. And thus the *Caraites* understand it, a Sect of *Jews* that are for keeping close to the Letter of the Law. But not to insist upon this, if it be not prohibited in the Law of *Moses*, yet it is certain that there is no where any express *Allowance*, for any Man to have more Wives than one, as there is in the Law of *Mahomet*. Nor is this Practice ever mentioned with the least Approbation in that Law; yea there are several things that seem fairly to imply a Disapprobation of it *. *Moses* in the Account he gives of the Creation of *Adam* and *Eve*, and the original Institution of Marriage in Paradise, leads them to conclude, that *one* Man was originally designed for *one* Woman; that this was the primitive Constitution in a State of Innocence, and what God designed at Man's first Creation. And there are several excellent Regulations in that Law, to remedy the Inconveniencies of the contrary Practice, which had then obtained, and as Circumstances then stood, could scarce be entirely prevented. It is provided in that Law, that if a Man had more Wives than one, he should be obliged to treat them *equally* with Kindness and Humanity, and not out of a greater Affection to one, to use the other ill, or to shew a partial regard to the Children of the one, rather than to those of the other, see *Exod. xxi. 9, 10. Deut. xxi. 15, 16, 17.* The obliging him to *provide* for them all, with respect to their Food, Raiment, and Duty

* Concerning this, see Reflect. on Polyg. Dissert. iii. 4.

of Marriage, and not to diminish this with regard to the former Wife upon his taking another, was designed to prevent the multiplying of their Wives. And whereas a King might be supposed to have it more in his power, than others, to maintain a great number of Wives, and might look upon this as a piece of Grandeur and Royalty, he is expressly commanded *not to multiply Wives to himself*, Deut. xvii. 17. The proposing these Regulations cannot in reason be construed into an Approbation of that Practice, but rather fairly implies a Disapprobation of it, and shews the Disadvantages attending it.

With respect to *Divorces*, the Author represents that according to that Law, a Man *might turn off his Wives at pleasure to take fresh ones, and so glut himself with the greatest Variety; and might discharge her from him, without giving a Reason for it.* But this is far from being a fair Representation of the *Mosaick Law* relating to that Matter. The Law relating to Divorces, is, Deut. xxiv. 1—4. *When a Man hath taken a Wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no Favour in his Eyes, because he hath found some Uncleanness in her, then let him write her a Bill of Divorcement, &c.* Here it is evident that *Moses* doth not allow a Man to divorce his Wife merely at Pleasure. There ought to be a Reason for it, and the Reason here assigned is some *Matter of Uncleanness*. This the School of *Sammai*, a noted Set of Doctors among the *Jews*, understood of some weighty important Cause. And some of the later Rabbies, particularly the famous *Abarbinel*, understand it of a light indecent Behaviour that rendered her suspected of Impurity. To which they add, as another Reason for Divorces, a Difference and Contrariety of *Temper*, that was not likely to be cured, so that they

hated each other's Company, and lived in perpetual Contention. What is expressed *v. 1.* by *her not finding Favour in his Eyes*, is expressed in the *3d v.* by his *hating her*. In this Case the Man was permitted to give her a *Bill of Divorcement*. This Law was designed to prevent worse Consequences; and in many Cases was really an Advantage to the Woman, who was hereby delivered from a domestic Tyrant, a Man that hated her, and left at liberty to marry another, with whom she might live more happily. And if this Author were to argue this Point on the Foot of the Law of Nature, he might probably find it no easy Matter to answer *Milton's* Books on that Subject. Yet it is plain this Law was not designed to encourage frequent Divorces. It seems rather to have been intended to check and regulate them, which probably had been in Use before; for *Moses* refers to them, before the giving of that Law in *Deut. xxiv. 1—4.* See *Lev. xxi. 14. xxii. 13. Numb. xxx. 9.* By this Law they were not to send them away but for some weighty Cause, and that not without a *Bill of Divorcement*. And the Formality necessary in this Bill of Divorcement gave Time for Consideration. But especially what is said, *v. 4.* is plainly designed to shew a Disapprobation of such Divorces. For in order to discourage them it is ordered, that if the Woman should marry again, and the latter Husband should divorce her or die, *her former Husband which sent her away may not take her again to be his Wife, after that she is defiled: For that is Abomination before the Lord, and thou shalt not cause the Land to Sin.* Where it is supposed, that tho' she was allowed after her Divorcement to go and be another Man's Wife, because otherwise the Divorcement would have been a much greater Hardship and Grievance to the divorced Woman; yet

yet she was looked upon as *defiled* to her first Husband by the second Marriage. And as the Man that had first divorced her was the Cause of it, he was never to marry her again; and let him repent ever so much of the Usage he had given her, and tho' his Affection should return to her, or it might otherwise be of great Advantage to him to take her again, it was never permitted upon any Pretence whatsoever. And this had a great Tendency to prevent rash Divorces for sudden Quarrels, or slight Causes *, and tended to make them consider well before they did it. It is probable that for a long time, there were few Instances of Divorces among the People of *Israel*. Mr. *Selden* observes, *Ux. Hebr.* lib. iii. cap. 19. That there is no Instance of that kind recorded, nor any mention made of Divorces at all, from the Days of *Moses* till the time of *Isaiab*, who alludes to it, *Is.* 1. 1. and so does *Jeremiab* ch. iii. 1—6. and by the way I would observe, that in this Passage of *Jeremiab*, it is hinted in the Allusion, that the Bill of Divorcement was in those Times given for weighty Causes, and particularly on the Account of light immodest Behaviour. Divorces, indeed, became very common in the latter Times of the *Jewish* State; especially when the School of *Hillel* had interpreted that Law in a very loose Sense, contrary as is probable to the Opinion of their an-

* Mr. *Selden* observes the remarkable Difference in this Respect, between the Law of *Moses* and that of *Mahomet*, who allows the Husband that had divorced his Wife to take her again, tho' he had divorced her three Times, and she had each Time been married to another, *Seld. Ux. Heb.* lib. i. cap. 9. lib. iii. cap. 21. And yet this Author represents it, as if the *Mahometan* Law were preferable to that of *Moses*, with regard to arbitrary Divorcement and the multiplicity of Wives and Concubines, and had reformed very much upon it. See Lett. to *Ex.* p. 43.

cient Doctors. And therefore our Saviour, to prevent the Excesses and Abuses that were committed in this Matter, revoked the Permission that had been allowed, and brought the Ties of Marriage to the original Strictness.

But what our Author cries out most against is the Law concerning the Trial of *Jealousy*. He says, that " a Man moved with a jealous Mind, whether with or without a Cause, or whether real or only pretended, could put his Wife to the Trial of Jealousy, and procure a Priest to poison her if he thought fit, and had received a valuable Consideration for it, *p. 268.*" And so he goes on to make a very scandalous Representation of the Nature and Design of that Law.

I shall first make some general Observations, concerning this Law for the Trial of Jealousy, and then answer this Writer's Exceptions against it.

As to the general Ends of this Law they were good and excellent. *Jealousy* is a furious and unreasonable Passion, and often produces the most dismal Effects. And by the Account the wise Man gives of it, it is not improbable, that in those Countries it was particularly raging, *Prov. vi. 34, 35. Cant. viii. 6.* The general Design of this Law was to restrain the rage of Jealousy, and hinder it from flying out into those furious Excesses and Resentments that it might otherwise produce. According to this Law, the Husband was not to take the Punishment into his own Hands, but to leave the Cause to God, who would signalize his Justice upon the Woman, if she was really guilty; and on the other Hand, if she escaped the expected Vengeance, he was to regard it as a Declaration from Heaven of her *Innocence*; than which nothing could have a greater Tendency to calm and satisfy his

his Mind, and remove the Suspensions he had conceived. So that by this Law there was Provision made for appeasing a cruel Jealousy, for clearing suspected Innocence, or for punishing secret Adultries. And it had a manifest Tendency to restrain the Women from indecent Liberties, and oblige them to a modest Conduct, when there was such a Law as this, whereby they might be called to a strict Trial of their Innocence, and in which they were taught to expect the most dreadful Punishments from Heaven in Case they were guilty. These were the general Ends of this Law, and they were certainly valuable and important. And if for such Ends as these, it pleased God to appoint such a Law, and to interpose extraordinarily in execution of it, among that People, and under that Dispensation, when in so many Instances he saw fit to interpose in an extraordinary manner; it must be owned to be a wonderful Instance of the divine Condescension; but I can see nothing in it that can be proved to be unworthy of the Wisdom, the Goodness, and Justice of the Supreme Being. And if, as some learned Persons think highly probable, there had been before this some extraordinary Trials of Innocence, that had obtained among other Nations in those early Ages, and which were made subservient to the promoting of *Idolatry*, it might seem fit to God to indulge something of this kind to his People, that they might not be under a Temptation to have recourse to *Idols* for these Purposes, in Conformity to the Customs of other Nations*.

As to the particular Rites made Use of on this Occasion, they were all so contrived, as to render the whole Action more *sacred* and solemn, and to

* See concerning this, Dr. *Spencer de Leg. Hebr. Ritual.* lib. iii. Diff. 1. cap. 2. Sect. 3.

impress the Minds of the People with a stronger Sense of the divine Interposition. Hence it was appointed, that this Trial should only be at the *Sanctuary*; the Priests who had the management of sacred Ceremonies in a peculiar manner committed to them, had the Cognizance of it. There was a particular Sacrifice appointed to be offered *. The Water that was to be drank by the Woman that was suspected, was to be holy, that is, as the *Jews* understand it, taken out of the *Laver* that stood in the *Sanctuary*, and which was employed in sacred Uses; there was to be some *Dust* scattered upon it taken off the *Floor* of the *Sanctuary*, and the drinking of this Water was to be accompanied with a solemn Adjuration. All these Ceremonies (tho' this Author is pleased to ridicule them,) tended to give a greater Solemnity to the whole Action, which was in the nature of an extraordinary Appeal to Heaven. And when once these Ceremonies were divinely appointed, the Effect could not be expected, if these Ceremonies had not been observed.

Let us now consider what this Writer offers against this Law.

One Objection is, that if a Man only pretended Jealousy, he might put his Wife to this Trial; and was not obliged in this Case, to name the Person suspected, nor to declare the Grounds of his Suspicion. But by the unanimous Consent of all the *Jewish* Writers, before a Man could bring his Wife to this Trial of Jealousy, he was obliged to produce Witnesses, both that he had given her Warning not to be

* Lest this Writer should say this Sacrifice was contrived for the Benefit of the Priest, I would observe, that the Offering was only to be the tenth Part of an *Ephah* of Barley, which is about the Quantity of our *Pottle*; without Oil or Frankincense; part of which was to be consumed upon the Altar, so that the Priest could get no great matter by it.

in secret with such a Man, and that after this his Warning or Prohibition, she had been in secret with that Man for some time. Each of these things he was to prove by two Witnesses, or he could not be admitted to put his Wife to this Trial. See this proved by Mr. Selden, from the best Jewish Authorities. *Ux. Hebr.* lib. iii. cap. 13.

But the chief Objection is, the hand that the Priest was to have in the whole Management of this Affair. *The Man was to bring his Wife to the Priest, who was to prepare the Draught, and to sprinkle some of the Dust of the Sanctuary into it. And he thinks the Husband might procure the Priest to poison her, if he thought fit, and had received a valuable Consideration for it.* Besides he observes, that *the Law has made no Provision what must be done, supposing the Priest himself had been the suspected Person; and then he would doubtless have cleared the Woman, and proved her Innocency upon such a Trial. So that a married Woman could not be safe in playing the Whore with any but a Priest, and then she might be sure of being brought off upon any Trial of Jealousy in her Husband. And he thinks it is very plain, that such a Law must have put every Man's Wife into the power, and left them at the Devotion of the Priest,* p. 268, 269.

All that this shews, is the Author's forwardness to throw Dirt upon the Priests, and to suppose them guilty of the greatest Villany and Wickedness; tho' in this Instance he has nothing but his own unreasonable Prejudices and Malice against them, to support the Charge.

One would be apt to think, according to his Representation of the matter, that there was a particular Priest fixed by that Constitution, in every Village or *Parish*; and that if a Man was jealous of his Wife, he was obliged by Law to apply to that

that particular Priest to try his Wife, even tho' the Priest himself happened to be the suspected Person; in which Case it might be expected, he would endeavour to manage it so as to bring her off upon the Trial. Or if the Man had only a mind to get rid of his Wife, whether he suspected her or not, he had nothing to do but to hire the *Parish-Priest* to put Poison into the Water, upon pretence of sprinkling Dust upon; and as this matter was very privately transacted, it might easily be done without Danger of Discovery.

But these are ridiculous Suppositions, that proceed upon an entire Ignorance, or wilful Misrepresentation of that Constitution. That Trial of Jealousy was not to be in a private way in the Man's own Country or Town, but only at the *Sanctuary*, where there were always considerable numbers of the most eminent Persons; and where the chief Council of the Nation generally met and determined Causes. Nor was it in the power of any particular Priest, supposing he had a special Interest in it, to procure that Trial to be brought before him when he thought fit. For the several Families, or Courses of Priests, officiated in their *turns*; and the particular Priests belonging to each Course, had their several Services or Offices assigned them by Lot *. And supposing any particular Priest to be the Person suspected, as this Writer puts the Case; it is contrary to common Sense to imagine, that the Man that was jealous, would bring his Wife to be tried before *that* Priest whom he suspected, when there were so many other Priests ministering in their several Courses, to whom he might bring her. The Trial was not a secret thing, but done in a very publick manner. For there were always considerable numbers of Priests

* Concerning this, see *Lightsfoot, Hor. Hebr. in Luke i. 8. 9.*
and

and *Levites* waiting and ministring at the Sanctuary at the same time. And the *Jews* affirm, that the Woman was not to drink the Water, but in the Presence of the Great Council *; who first did all they could to persuade her to acknowledge the Fault, if she was guilty; which if she did, she was put away from her Husband without a Dowry. And the Priest that should attempt to poison the Woman in such Circumstances, and before such numbers of Persons, must, instead of being thought politick and cunning, be supposed out of his Senses; as well as the Man that would attempt to put him upon it, since it was scarce possible to escape a Discovery. Besides that, it would have been to no Purpose for a Man to attempt to bribe a particular Priest, except he could have bribed the whole *Cause* at once, which was very numerous, to join in the Design of poisoning the Woman; since he could not know that that particular Priest would be the Person to whose Lot it would fall to do that piece of Service. Yet upon the Strength of these absurd and wild Suppositions, this Writer triumphs, as if he had absolutely demonstrated the *Mosaick* Oeconomy to be an Imposture. And so he takes his Leave of this Subject and of me, after insinuating, that I do not believe that Men are to be judged by God *at the last Day, according to their Works*; and that I make the Repentance to which Pardon is promised in the Gospel, to consist only in some Death-Bed Vows, Professions, and Promises; tho' he knows, if he has *read* the Book he pretends to answer, that I most expressly declare the contrary, see *Div. Author*. p. 474, 475. These Insinuations only shew how gladly he would catch at any thing, which he thinks might tend to expose his Adversaries, tho', as it usually happens in such

* See Selden, *Ux. Hebr.* lib. iii. cap. 15.

Cases, he has only thereby exposed himself. I have now done with our Author and his Book, in which he sets up for a Vindicator of *Moral Truth and Reason*; but never were the sacred Names of Truth and Reason more prostituted and abused, than they are by this Writer. There is some pleasure in managing a Controversy upon a Subject of Importance, with a Person of *Learning and Candor*, where the Debate is carried on with a Regard to Decency, and by fair Reason and Argument. But to have to do with one that can allow himself in gross Misrepresentation and *Abuse*, in low *Buffoonry*, and confident Assertions of plain *Falshoods*, is one of the last Employments a Man would chuse. And therefore I hope I shall be excused, if I shall not think fit to meddle with this Writer any more, except he should happen to offer something that looks like fair candid Reasoning, which if one may judge from what he hath hitherto done, there is little Reason to expect.

F I N I S.



